NATION

'Gross contempt' by Telangana Speaker: SC

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BUSINESS

17 electronics projects worth ₹7,172 cr get govt nod

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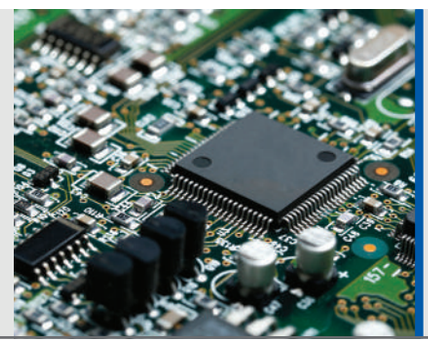

SPORTS

Ranji: Smaran's 227 puts Karnataka in driver's seat

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SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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SALAR UPCLOSE

RaGa should stop taking advice from NGO-like people: BJP MLA

NAHEED ATAULLA

Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Karnataka Legislative Assembly and BJP MLA representing Hubballi–Dharwad West, Arvind Chandrakant Bellad, said Congress Leader Rahul Gandhi was failing because he was listening "NGO kinds of people who have no understanding of the politics" and not real political advisers. Speaking to Salar on both State politics national, he said that the BJP wouldn't win an election without Prime Minister Narendra Modi's support, while the caste survey in Karnataka was designed by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah so that he could hold power in the face of Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar's challenges.

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CM pushes PM for sugar MSP hike, irrigation boost

BENGALURU, 17 NOV

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to revise the sugar Minimum Support Price (MSP) and address long-pending irrigation issues during their meeting on 17 November. He said the state had temporarily halted the recent sugarcane farmers' agitation by mandating factories to pay an additional Rs 100 per tonne, supported equally by the government and mills, but warned the relief was "not a permanent solution" due to the Centre's fixed sugar MSP of Rs 31 per kg. He sought an MSP revision, assured ethanol procurement and clarity on harvesting and transport costs. He also pressed for speedy action on key water projects, including Mekedatu approval, Krishna Tribunal notification and Upper Krishna funding

—Salar News

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SC rejects yr-long construction ban in Delhi amid smog

NEW DELHI, 17 NOV

Supreme Court, hearing the Delhi-NCR air pollution case, expressed reluctance to impose a year-round construction ban, citing significant socio-economic repercussions. Chief Justice BR Gavai emphasised that halting all activities would have "far-reaching consequences" on millions of livelihoods. Senior Advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan, pushing for emergency measures, declared the air quality crisis akin to an "emergency," urging a ban on construction and private vehicles. He lamented that "three in ten deaths in the NCR are caused by air pollution." The Chief Justice instructed the Ministry of Environment to develop long-term solutions." Meanwhile, Delhi's air quality improved marginally on Monday with the AQI recorded at 351, still in the 'very poor' category.

—Agencies

India signs 1-yr deal to import 2.2MT of LPG from US

The agreement, India's first structured purchase of American LPG, will account for 10 per cent of the country's annual LPG imports ***PHOTO: PTI***

NEW DELHI, 17 NOV

India has moved to deepen its energy and trade ties with the United States, with state-run oil companies signing a one-year contract to import 2.2 million tonnes of LPG from the US Gulf Coast in 2026. The agreement, India's first structured purchase of American LPG, will account for nearly 10 per cent of the country's annual LPG imports and is seen as part of New Delhi's wider effort to narrow its trade surplus with Washington.

Oil Minister Hardeep Singh Puri described the deal as "a historic first", saying it would bolster energy security and diversify supply sources at a time when India imports around 65 per cent of its LPG requirement. Supplies will be shipped by Chevron, Phillips and TotalEnergies Trading SA, priced off the Mount Belvieu benchmark to ensure greater transparency. Puri said that ensuring affordable access to clean cooking fuel remains a government priority, noting that over Rs 40,000 crore was provided last year to shield Ujjwala households from global price fluctuations.

- The first phase of the India-US trade deal is 'nearing closure' and would address the 50% tariffs imposed by Trump on India goods, an official said on Monday.

The deal comes as India and the US edge closer to finalising the first tranche of their bilateral trade agreement (BTA). A senior official said the initial package—designed to address steep reciprocal tariffs imposed during the Trump administration—is "near closure" and will be announced on a mutually agreed date. The broader BTA aims to ease market-access barriers and help expand bilateral trade to USD 500 billion by 2030.

Officials clarified that the LPG contract is not part of the BTA negotiations but aligns with India's broader push to balance trade. Six rounds of talks have concluded, with the next phase expected to begin in 2025. *—PTI*

Hasina gets death penalty for 'crimes against humanity'

Bangladesh asks India to extradite the ex-PM immediately

They are biased and politically motivated. In their distasteful call for the death penalty, they reveal the brazen and murderous intent of extremist figures within the interim government to remove Bangladesh's last elected prime minister

—Sheikh Hasina, Bangladesh's ex-PM

DHAKA, 17 NOV

Bangladesh's deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina was on Monday sentenced to death in absentia by the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) for "crimes against humanity" linked to her government's crackdown on student-led protests last year. Former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal was also handed the death penalty on similar charges.

The tribunal, delivering its verdict after a months-long trial, described the 78-year-old Awami League chief as the "mastermind and principal architect" of the repression that left hundreds dead. Hasina, declared a fugitive by the court , has been living in India since she fled Bangladesh on 5 August, 2024, amid massive protests.

Following the judgement, Bangladesh's foreign ministry demanded the immediate extradition of Hasina and Kamal, citing obligations under the bilateral treaty. It warned that granting asylum to those "convicted of crimes against humanity" would be an "extremely unfriendly act".

Protesters throw stones during a standoff with cops outside the home of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in Bangladesh's Dhaka on Monday ***PHOTO: PTI***

India said it had noted the verdict, adding that it would engage constructively with all stakeholders in Bangladesh in the interest of peace and stability. It reaffirmed its commitment to the people of Bangladesh.

The verdict came a day after several crude bombs exploded across Dhaka. No casualties were reported, but the incidents added to the unease in the city. The sentencing comes months before parliamentary elections scheduled for February, from which Hasina's Awami League has been barred. The ICT said the prosecution had proved beyond reasonable doubt that Hasina ordered the use of deadly force, authorised helicopter operations and made inflammatory statements that encouraged attacks on unarmed protesters in July–August 2025. A UN rights office report earlier estimated that up to 1,400 people were killed during the month-long agitation, known as the July Uprising. The tribunal, set up to try 1971 war collaborators, was amended by the current administration to prosecute leaders of the former regime. *—PTI*

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VICTIMS FROM TELANGANA

45 Indians killed in Medina as bus, tanker collide

NEW DELHI, 17 NOV

At least 45 Indian Umrah pilgrims from Telangana were killed when their bus collided with a fuel tanker near Medina, Saudi Arabia, in the early hours of Monday. Local authorities confirmed that one Indian passenger survived the crash and is undergoing treatment. Two local facilitators travelling with the group also died.

The victims' mortal remains have been shifted to King Fahad Hospital, King Salman Hospital and Al Miqat Hospital. Officials from the Indian mission in Jeddah are coordinating with Saudi authorities to manage identification and further procedures. Families will have the option of repatriation or burial at Madina's Jannatul Baqi cemetery, in line with local customs.a

The accident occurred around 11 pm local time (1.30 am IST), nearly 40km from Medina. Officials said the bus had halted on the roadside when a fuel tanker rammed into it, triggering a massive explosion. The group was travelling from Mecca to Madina after performing Umrah. Saudi authorities have launched an investigation into the incident.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and several leaders expressed condolences to the families of the deceased. The Indian Consulate in Jeddah has set up a 24×7 control room and deployed officials to the accident site. The Indian Embassy in Riyadh is also in touch with senior officials from Saudi Arabia's foreign, interior and transport ministries. Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy expressed deep shock and directed state officials to coordinate with the Ministry of External Affairs and the Saudi Embassy. A control room has been established at the state secretariat to assist families with information and support. —PTI

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A relative of a victim breaks down upon learning of the crash in Hyderabad ***PHOTO: PTI***

18 of one Hyderabad family killed

The bus had reportedly halted on the roadside when a fuel tanker rammed into it, triggering a massive explosion ***PHOTO: PTI***

SC enforces a 1 km no-mining buffer around tiger reserves

NEW DELHI, 17 NOV

The Supreme Court on Monday issued sweeping pan-India directions mandating all states to notify Eco-Sensitive Zones (ESZs) around every tiger reserve, including buffer and fringe areas, within one year. It also imposed a complete ban on mining within 1 km of any core or buffer zone.

The bench of Chief Justice B R Gavai and Justices Augustine George Masih and A S Chandurkar accepted in full the findings of an expert committee that documented extensive ecological damage inside the Jim Corbett Tiger Reserve. The

court directed the Uttarakhand government to demolish all unauthorised constructions, restore degraded areas, and ensure that only native species are used in afforestation. The Central Empowered Committee (CEC) will supervise the restoration plan.

The panel had estimated ecological damage at nearly Rs 29.8 crore. It reiterated that tiger safaris cannot be permitted in core or critical habitats and may operate only on non-forest or degraded land in buffer zones, outside tiger corridors, and alongside a full-fledged rescue and rehabilitation centre. The court also listed prohibited activities in ESZs, including mining, polluting industries, hydel projects, and introduction of exotic species. States must fill vacancies in tiger reserves, declare silence zones within three months, notify core and buffer areas within six months, and file compliance affidavits within a year. *—PTI*

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DELHI BLAST: NIA ARRESTS UMAR'S CO-CONSPIRATOR

NEW DELHI, 17 NOV

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Monday arrested Jasir Bilal Wani in Srinagar, calling him an "active co-conspirator" of suicide bomber Umar un Nabi in the Red Fort car blast.

Wani, a resident from Anantnag and known as 'Danish', allegedly provided technical support for attacks, including drone modification and rocket assembly. NIA said he worked closely with Umar to plan the carnage. Wani said Umar had pressured him for months to become a suicide bomber. *—PTI*

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Nitish quits as CM, Tejashwi elected LoP

PATNA, 17 NOV

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar tendered his resignation to Governor Arif Mohammad Khan on Monday, after a brief cabinet meeting authorised him to recommend the dissolution of the assembly. The meeting, which lasted barely ten minutes, saw the council of ministers unanimously pass the resolution.

Earlier in the day, RJD's Tejashwi Yadav was elected Leader of the Opposition in the Bihar Legislative Assembly. A party needs at least 10 per cent of the House strength, 25 seats in the 243-member assembly, to claim the post. The RJD won exactly 25 seats in the recently concluded elections.

Kumar met the Governor soon after the cabinet meeting to convey the government's decision. A swearing-in ceremony for the new government is expected in Patna on 20 November, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and senior NDA leaders likely to attend.

State BJP president Dilip Jaiswal said newly elected NDA legislators will meet on Tuesday to choose their legislature party leader, adding that the oath-taking may take place on 20 or 21 November. The NDA swept the polls with over 200 seats, including 89 for BJP and 85 for JD(U). *—PTI*

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B'luru Tech Summit to commence today

BENGALURU, 17 NOV

The State government will unveil its new IT, start-up, and space-tech policies at the 28th Bengaluru Tech Summit, commencing on 18 November at the Bangalore International Exhibition Centre (BIEC). The event will showcase Karnataka's AI-ready computer, aimed at bridging the digital access gap. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah will inaugurate the summit, with Deputy CM DK Shivakumar also in attendance. Minister for IT Priyank Kharge noted, "We are glad to reaffirm that the Bengaluru Tech Summit has grown into a truly global innovation platform." This year's edition introduces The Future Makers Conclave, anticipated to gather nearly 10,000 founders and innovators. *—Agencies*

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FORCED TO DRINK ALCOHOL

Woman lured, gangraped in Koppal

KOPPAL, 17 NOV

A 36-year-old woman was allegedly gangraped by four men near Madlur village in Yelburga taluk of Koppal district, prompting the police to launch an intensive investigation and arrest all the accused. The survivor, who is in critical condition, is undergoing treatment at Koppal District Hospital.

The accused are Lakshman Kenchappa Karaguli, Basavaraj Sakreppa, Bhimappa Maski, and Shashikumar Mahadevappa ***PHOTO: SALAR***

According to the complaint filed at Yelburga Police Station, the woman had travelled from Hosapete to Kushtagi on 16 November to collect money from an acquaintance. One of the accused, Lakshman, who had known her for about six months, allegedly offered to arrange Rs 5,000 and asked her to accompany him.

He then took her on a motorcycle to a secluded location on the Yelburga–Kushtagi Road, where three others joined him. The men allegedly forced her to consume alcohol, which the survivor believes may have been laced with sedatives, before sexually assaulting her.

Police said the accused, Lakshman Kenchappa Karaguli, 32, Basavaraj Sakreppa, 23, Bhimappa Maski, 20, and Shashikumar Mahadevappa, 23, were known to the survivor and took advantage of her situation. They were arrested early Monday and produced before court. Police Sub-Inspector Vijaypratap told **Salar News** that the case has been registered under Sections 115(2), 70, 351(2) and 3(5) of the Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023. *—Salar News*

Woman 'harassed, robbed' while walking dog in City

BENGALURU, 17 NOV

A 25-year-old woman was allegedly sexually harassed and robbed of her mobile phone by an unidentified person while she was out walking her dog in Upakar Layout here.The incident occurred at night on 7 November, when a man approached her asking if he could pet her dog and initiated a conversation. When she tried to leave, the man suddenly touched her inappropriately. After the woman pushed him away, he again attempted to touch her, prompting her to hit him.The complainant said her mobile phone fell on the ground during the struggle. When she screamed for help, the man allegedly picked up the phone and fled. The police registered a case under various sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, and efforts are underway to identify and nab the suspect. *—PTI*

31 blackbucks die in Belagavi zoo, probe ordered

BELAGAVI, 17 NOV

Thirty-one blackbucks have died at a zoo here in just four days due to a bacterial infection, Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre said on Monday. The devastating toll, which reduced Kittur Rani Chennamma Zoo's blackbuck population to seven, has prompted a high-level investigation from the government. Eight antelopes died on 13 November, followed by 20 more deaths on 15 November. Three more blackbucks died at the facility in the last two days. Minister Khandre held a meeting with the zoo officials. Khandre ordered an inquiry to determine the source and spread of the disease among the animals. Measures are being taken to contain the disease.*—PTI*

CM to inaugurate Ramakrishna Ashrama centenary

MYSURU, 17 NOV

The Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama in Mysuru will mark its centenary with a four-day celebration from 21 to 24 November, also commemorating RIMSE's Golden Jubilee and Viveka Prabha's Silver Jubilee. In a post on X, the Ashrama said Chief Minister Siddaramaiah will inaugurate the event on 21 November at Ramakrishna Vidyashala. Swami Muktidananda said the milestone reflects a century of service. The programme includes Narayana Seva, release of a commemorative souvenir, lectures by senior monks, and sessions on the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda. Over 300 monks, 40 nuns, scholars and alumni are expected to attend the 19 sessions programme during the four-day spiritual and cultural celebration.*—Salar News*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Prof booked for sexual harassment in Mysuru

MYSURU, 17 NOV

Jayalakshmipuram police have registered a case against a professor of the University of Mysore School of Engineering for allegedly sexually harassing an engineering student. Based on a complaint filed by the student, the police have booked the accused, Professor Bharath, on various charges of sexual harassment, criminal intimidation and wrongful restraint.*—Salar News*

KADLEKAI PARISHE IS HERE

The 2025 Kadlekai Parishe or annual groundnut fair brought Basavanagudi's Bull Temple to life on Monday, with Transport and Muzrai Minister Ramalinga Reddy inaugurating the festivities. The fair will go on until 21 November **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

CITY TO FACE 6-HOUR POWER CUT TODAY

BENGALURU, 17 NOV

Several parts of Bengaluru will face a scheduled power outage on 18 November as the Bangalore Electricity Supply Company (BESCOM) undertakes urgent maintenance work.

The power supply will be disrupted from 11am to 5pm due to essential repair and maintenance activities at the 66/11 kV Sobha City substation. BESCOM said the shutdown is required to carry out emergency works aimed at ensuring system safety and improving reliability of supply in the future.The six-hour outage will affect more than 20 neighbourhoods, including Sobha City, RK Hegde Nagar and Thanisandra. *—PTI*

CM, DKS meet Cong top brass amid reshuffle buzz

This has prompted MLAs to express ministerial aspirations

NEW DELHI/BENGALURU, 17 NOV

Speculation over an impending cabinet reshuffle and possible leadership changes in Karnataka intensified on Monday as Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar held a series of high-level meetings in the national capital . Siddaramaiah met Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge in what party leaders termed a "courtesy visit", though the discussion is understood to have included cabinet expansion.

He later joined Shivakumar for a meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, where they raised issues related to sugarcane farmers' protests, key irrigation projects, and the proposed Indian Institute of Technology to be set up in Raichu here. Earlier, Siddaramaiah said he would abide by the Congress high command's decision on the cabinet reshuffle. Two berths remain vacant following the exit of B Nagendra and the removal of K N Rajanna. Party insiders say a reshuffle, if approved, would signal that Siddaramaiah is likely to continue for a full term, weakening speculation of a mid-term "power-sharing" switch with the Deputy Chief Minister. Shivakumar, who met Kharge a day earlier, dismissed talk of leadership change, calling his meeting a routine organisational interaction.

"We are all there if the party is there," he further said. The reshuffle chatter has prompted several Congress MLAs to publicly express ministerial aspirations.

Hungund MLA Vijayanand Kashappanavar requested a berth, citing his family's 50-year association with the party. Hubballi-Dharwad East MLA Abbayya Prasad also claimed strong credentials, pointing to his electoral record and pressure from constituents, including leaders of the Dalit commnity of the state. Social Welfare Minister HC Mahadevappa said decisions rest with the AICC leadership and the chief minister, while Home Minister G Parameshwara said he was unaware of any "revolution" or imminent changes. Shivakumar said his irrigation department had prepared detailed materials for the meeting held on Monday—*PTI*

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar in a meeting **PHOTO: PTI**

> **I am not the one to blackmail the Congress. I have built this party and worked tirelessly day and night for it. I will continue to do so in the future**
>
> -DK Shivakumar, DyCM

SAYS DIDN'T DEFY INDIAN LAW

X challenges 'Sahyog' portal takedown process

BENGALURU, 17 NOV

Social media giant 'X' Corp has informed the Karnataka High Court that it received 29,118 government requests to remove content between January and June 2025, complying with 26,641 of them, a 91.49 per cent compliance rate.

The company argued that these figures contradict a single judge's finding that the platform intends to defy Indian law. The data was furnished as part of X's writ appeal against the order upholding the Union government's 'Sahyog' portal, the online system used to issue takedown directions to intermediaries.

X Corp contended that government agencies are unlawfully using Section 79(3)(b) of the Information Technology Act, 2000, along with Rule 3(1)(d) of the 2021 IT Rules, to issue content removal orders.

This, the company said, creates a parallel and unconstitutional mechanism that bypasses Section 69A of the IT Act, the only statutory process for blocking online content in India.

X argued that Section 79 is merely a 'safe harbour' clause shielding intermediaries from liability and does not empower the government to direct content blocking.

Despite this, an 31 October, 2023 MeitY memorandum allegedly authorised officials in ministries and state governments to issue blocking directions.

The Ministry of Home Affairs created a confidential 'Sahyog' portal to facilitate such takedown orders without statutory support or transparency.

According to X, this amounts to an impermissible extension of executive power and enables censorship without due process. The Supreme Court ruling remains applicable as the statutory provisions have not changed. *—PTI*

Farmers shift to M'rashtra mills amid price disparity

BELAGAVI, 17 NOV

Sugarcane farmers in Belagavi and Bagalkot districts are increasingly selling their produce to mills in neighbouring Maharashtra, drawn by higher prices and faster payments despite the Karnataka government fixing a procurement price of Rs 3,300 per tonne.

As first reported by Salar News on 27 October in the article 'Sugarcane farmers prefer M'rashtra mills', growers say the gap in price and reliability remains decisive. Maharashtra mills are offering around Rs 300 more per tonne, with Bidri Sugar Factory paying Rs 3,614, Dalmia Bharat Sugars

Rs 3,525 and Bhogavati Sugar Factory Rs 3,653 per tonne. Many Belagavi mills, farmers say, are unwilling to offer even Rs 3,500.

Siddagouda Modagi, State President of the Karnataka Sugarcane Growers' Association, said farmers are moving away from local mills due to alleged manipulation of cane weight, delayed payments, and instalment-based settlements. "Maharashtra mills offer fair prices and clear payments within 15 days," he said.

Mill owners, however, attribute Karnataka's lower prices to reduced sugar recovery. Nirani Sugar Mills chairman and former MLA Muragesh Nirani, who owns four mills, said, "Cane price is fixed according to sugar recovery. Karnataka's recovery rate is lower than Maharashtra's, which results in the lower rate." Maharashtra's recovery averages around 13 per cent, compared with Belagavi's 11 per cent.

Farmer groups also blame political ownership of many mills in North Karnataka for chronic payment delays running into hundreds of crores.

Belagavi remains one of India's largest sugarcane belts, with about 1.5 lakh hectares under cultivation.

Of Karnataka's 77 operational sugar mills, 29 are in Belagavi, including Ugar Sugar Works, Shree Renuka Sugars and Belgaum Sugars.

The dispute led to weeks-long protests across North Karnataka.

A settlement was eventually reached at Rs 3,300 per tonne, which most farmers hailing from Belagavi accepted, though agitation continues in some districts for a higher price. *—Salar News*

Sugarcane farmers prefer M'rashtra mills

HIREKOP RAJAN SAMUEL
BELAGAVI, 27 OCT

Thousands of sugarcane growers from Northern Karnataka are supplying their crop to mills across the Maharashtra border, lured by higher prices, prompt payments, and greater transparency.

Farmer organisations, including the Karnataka Rajya Raita Sangha and Bharatiya Krushik Samaj, have blamed the State government's policies, lower procurement prices, and delayed payments for the exodus.

"Karnataka's sugar mills, especially in Belagavi district, have not cleared dues for cane supplied since 2023," said Chunappa Pujeri, State President of the Raita Sangha. "In Maharashtra's Kolhapur district, mills pay Rs 3,400–3,500 per tonne and clear payments within 15 days. In Karnataka, the rate is Rs 2,900–3,050, and payments are often delayed by more than a year."

According to farmer groups, over 25,000 growers from the Kittur Karnataka region regularly supply cane to Kolhapur-based mills such as Hemarasa, Harali, Hamidwadi, Shahu, Datt, Gurudatt, and Panchaganga, which together crush over 10 lakh tonnes annually.

Bharatiya Krushik Samaj President Siddagouda Modagi said Maharashtra mills also have fairer practices. "Many mills in Karnataka manipulate weighing and sugar recovery calculations. We have protested repeatedly against such irregularities," he said.

Modagi warned that the steady outflow of cane is eroding Karnataka's agricultural tax revenue. He also criticised the State government for failing to announce the crushing season or fix cane prices, even as Maharashtra begins operations on 1 November. "The Centre has set the Fair and Remunerative Price at Rs 3,550 per tonne, but Karnataka has yet to implement it," he added.

Sugar industry expert Rayanna RC attributed the price gap partly to lower sugar recovery rates—9.5 per cent to 12.8 per cent in Belagavi and Bagalkot districts—compared to higher yields in Kolhapur. "Old machinery and inefficient operations delay crushing and payments," he said, noting that several northern mills are running losses due to poor management and inadequate State support.

Farmer groups allege that many sugar mills in North Karnataka are owned by politicians who delay payments worth hundreds of crores.

Congress MLC and Harsha Sugar Mills owner Channaraj Hattiholi rejected the charge, saying, "Since inception, I have cleared all payments promptly and maintained transparency." —*Salar News*

> In Maharashtra's Kolhapur district, mills pay Rs 3,400–3,500 per tonne and clear payments within 15 days. In Karnataka, the rate is Rs 2,900–3,050, and payments are often delayed by more than a year
>
> —CHUNAPPA PUJERI, State President of the Raita Sangha

Thousands of sugarcane farmers in North Karnataka are supplying their crop to mills in Maharashtra **PHOTO: PTI**

SALAR REPORTED FIRST

local people's representatives, NGOs and environmental experts to control human-wildlife conflict.

Nandi monolith anointed in annual Chamundi Hills ritual

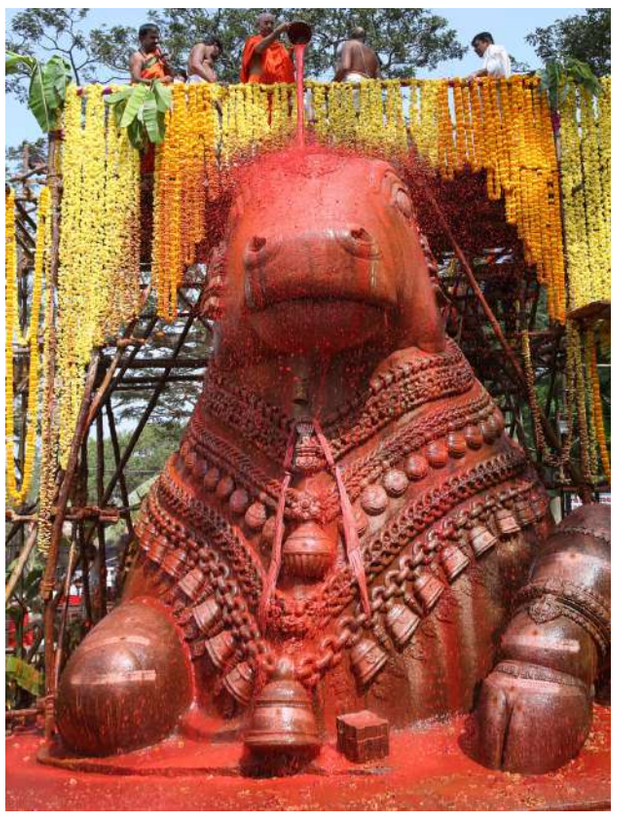
MYSURU, 17 NOV

The iconic monolithic Nandi statue atop Chamundi Hills was anointed on Monday during the annual Mahamastakabhisheka, drawing hundreds of devotees to the centuries-old site.

The ceremony was led by Suttur Mutt seer Shivaratri Deshikendra Swami, with Hosamutt Chidananda Swamiji, Adichunchanagiri Mutt seer Somanathananda Swamiji and other religious leaders in attendance.

Organised by the Bettada Balaga Charitable Trust, the ritual marks its 20th consecutive year. Since 2006, the trust has performed the Mahamastakabhisheka every Karthikamasa, praying for rain, peace and prosperity. The 360-year-old Nandi, sculpted during the reign of Dodda Devaraja Wadiyar, remains one of Mysuru's major attractions at an elevation of 3,489 feet above sea level.

The two-hour ceremony saw the statue "come alive" in vibrant hues as priests poured 32 sacred substances over the idol, including holy water, milk, tender coconut water, rice flour, sandal paste, turmeric, ghee, curds, panchamrutha and fruits. Hymns and prayers accompanied the ritual, while devotees were allowed to climb specially erected scaffolding to participate in the anointment under priestly guidance.Organisers said more than 600 litres of milk, 300 litres of curd, several tins of ghee, sandal paste and fruits were used. *—Salar News*



The anoinment ceremony marks its 20th consequetive year, with people praying for rain, peace and prosperity **PHOTO: SALAR**

AFFORDABLE & COMPACT KEO

K'taka launches state-made AI computer

BENGALURU, 17 NOV

Karnataka Minister Priyank Kharge on Monday announced the launch of KEO, a compact, affordable, AI-ready personal computer designed and developed entirely within the state to bridge the digital access gap.

The device, which stands for knowledge-driven, economical, open-source, aims to make intelligent computing accessible at the grassroots and empower citizens across Karnataka.

KEO, developed by the Department of Electronics, IT & BT in collaboration with Karnataka State Electronics Development Corporation Limited (KEONICS), will be formally unveiled by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah at the inaugural ceremony of the Bengaluru Tech Summit (BTS) 2025.

Speaking at the pre-event curtain-raiser of BTS 2025, Kharge said the device was built to ensure "every student, engineer, creator, innovator and household has access to powerful, intelligent computing at the grassroots, not just at the top of the pyramid. He highlighted that fewer than 10 per cent of Indian households own a computer.

In Karnataka, the figure is just 15 per cent, well below the level required for modern education and digital livelihoods.

"Studies show that computers are essential for academic work, coding, online classes and hybrid learning," he said, noting that over 60 per cent of Indian students reported being unable to participate in online learning due to the lack of a device, a factor contributing to higher dropout rates.

KEO runs on an open-source RISC-V processor with a Linux-based operating system. The device and comes preloaded with learning, programming and productivity tools. It also includes an on-device AI core, allowing AI applications to run locally without internet access and an AI agent. *—PTI*

'Metro to Tumakuru is an urban planning nightmare'

BENGALURU, 17 NOV

Bengaluru South BJP MP Tejasvi Surya on Monday expressed reservations over extending metro service to Tumakuru, terming it an "urban planning nightmare" and criticising the Congress government in Karnataka for the "exorbitant" cost involved in the project.

His remarks came a day after Bengaluru Metro Rail Corporation Ltd (BMRCL) floated tenders to prepare the detailed project rport for the 59.6-km corridor from Madavara in Bengaluru to Tumakuru, estimated to cost Rs 20,896 crore.

Surya claimed that building a metro to Tumakuru is an "urban planning nightmare".

"Instead of developing the long-pending suburban rail and improving connectivity to Tumakuru, the Congress govt once again wants to spend crores on preparing a DPR for a metro project that will take years and years to see fulfilment," Surya said.

"The metro's average operating speed is around 34 km/hr, making it similar to a bus for long inter-city journeys," he added. However, Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy said To reduce traffic congestion, metro should go to all places. *—PTI*

J&K cops announce reward for info on terrorists

JAMMU, 17 NOV

Security measures have been escalated at Jammu railway station following the recent dismantling of a white-collar terror module. Police and paramilitary forces conducted surprise frisking and baggage checks for all passengers arriving and departing from the station. Officials stated that this precautionary measure was taken after the arrest of eight individuals, including several doctors, who were allegedly plotting significant attacks in the country. Moreover, the police in Poonch announced a reward of Rs 5 lakh for credible information related to the presence or movement of terrorists. Authorities assured that the identities of informants would be kept confidential and called for public vigilance regarding potential terrorist activities. —*PTI*

Air India to resume Delhi-Shanghai flights from 1 Feb

NEW DELHI, 17 NOV

Air India has declared the resumption of direct flights between Delhi and Shanghai starting from 1 February 2026, marking its return to mainland China after nearly six years. The airline halted operations to Shanghai in early 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic while under government ownership. According to the announcement, services will operate four times a week using Boeing 787-8 aircraft, accommodating 18 business and 238 economy class seats. Air India also intends to introduce non-stop flights between Mumbai and Shanghai in 2026, pending regulatory approval. "This reinstatement of services follows recent diplomatic agreements between India and China aimed at restoring air links," said a representative. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Shinde's Sena ties up with NCP (SP) for local body polls

MUMBAI, 17 NOV

The ruling Mahayuti alliance in Maharashtra witnessed a split in Yeola in Nashik district with Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena deciding to join hands with NCP (SP), part of the Opposition, for municipal council polls. Yeola is the home turf of minister and NCP leader Chhagan Bhujbal. The new combination will be pitted against the BJP and Ajit Pawar's NCP. NCP leader Sameer Bhujbal said the post of municipal council president has been allocated to his party as part of the seat-sharing arrangement. Mahayuti comprises the BJP, Shiv Sena and NCP, while the Opposition has Shiv Sena (UBT), NCP (SP) and Congress.—*PTI*

Investigators probe 'shoe-bomber' angle

NIA says Ali provided Delhi blast suicide bomber Umar a safe house and logistic support

NEW DELHI, 17 NOV

Investigators probing the deadly Red Fort blast now suspect that Jaish-linked suicide bomber Umar un-Nabi may have acted as a "shoe bomber", using an explosive device concealed in his footwear to trigger the explosion that killed 15 people and injured several others. The shoe, recovered from beneath the driver's seat, contained a metal-like substance believed to have aided the detonation. Traces of the volatile explosive TATP were found on the shoe and on the vehicle's right tyre.

Officials said the blast involved a combination of TATP and ammonium nitrate, and that Jaish operatives had amassed a significant quantity of TATP. Investigators also found that Shaheen Shahid, the arrested doctor, facilitated funds worth Rs 20 lakh to the module for planning the explosion.

Separately, Hamood Ahmed Siddiqui, the brother of Al Falah University Chairman Javed Siddiqui, who is under scrutiny in the case, was arrested by Madhya Pradesh Police from Hyderabad in a two-decade-old financial fraud case in Mhow.

Amir Rashid Ali, a key accused in the Delhi blast case, was remanded to 10 days of NIA custody on Monday PHOTO: ANI

The death toll from the Red Fort blast rose also to 15 after two more injured victims, Lukmaan, 50, and Vinay Pathak, 50, succumbed to their injuries.

Meanwhile, The National Investigating Agency on Monday told a Delhi court that Amir Rashid Ali, a key accused in the case, allegedly arranged a safe house and provided logistical support to Umar.

Ali, a resident of Pampore in South Kashmir, was brought to the court of Principal District and Sessions Judge Anju Bajaj Chandna at the Patiala House courts complex amid tight security. The NIA investigation showed that the vehicle used in the blast was registered in Ali's name.

After the hearing, the judge allowed the NIA plea seeking custodial interrogation of the accused for 10 days. —*PTI*

J&K man who was detained succumbs to burn injuries

A dry fruit seller, who had set himself on fire after being picked up by police for questioning in connection with the terror module case, succumbed to injuries at a hospital in Srinagar, officials said on Monday. Bilal Ahmad Wani had himself on fire on Sunday in Qazigund after he and his son, Jasir Bilal, were picked up by police for questioning in connection with the terror module case. While Bilal was subsequently released, his son remains in custody for questioning. Wani is a neighbour of Dr Muzaffar Rather, as a key accused in the 'white collar terror module' case.

Want to teach Pak how to be responsible: Army Chief

NEW DELHI, 17 NOV

India will continue to consider the terrorists and their supporters alike, and it will respond firmly to terrorism, Chief of Army Staff Gen Upendra Dwivedi said on Monday, in a firm message to Pakistan.

"Operation Sindoor was just a trailer which ended in 88 hours. We are prepared for any circumstances in future. If Pakistan gives a chance, we will teach it how to behave responsibly with a neighbouring nation," General Dwivedi said while speaking at the 'Chanakya Defence Dialogues' event in New Delhi on Monday.

"India focuses on progress and prosperity. If someone creates obstacles in our course, then we will have to take some action against them," he said in an interactive session.

"We have said that talks and terror can't go together; blood and water cannot follow together. We are for a peaceful process, which we will cooperate with. Until then, we will treat terrorists and their sponsors alike," the Army Chief said.

"Today, India is in a position that it is not scared of any blackmailing," he said. "Our new normal in combating terrorism will be a challenge to Pakistan."Gen Dwivedi also said that the situation in Jammu and Kashmir has improved significantly following the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019. —*PTI*

Azam Khan, son get 7 yrs jail in dual PAN card case

RAMPUR, 17 NOV

Senior Samajwadi Party leader Mohammad Azam Khan and his son Abdullah Azam were on Monday convicted and sentenced to jail terms of up to seven years by a special MP/MLA court here in a 2019 case related to obtaining two PAN cards using different dates of birth.

Special magistrate Shobhit Bansal held both father and son guilty after examining documentary evidence and witness testimonies.

The prosecution may file an appeal if it feels the punishment is inadequate.

According to the prosecution, Abdullah obtained a PAN card from the Income Tax Department mentioning 1 January, 1993 as his date of birth, which matched the date in his school and high school certificates. The same date was also used in bank records.

The court held that Abdullah had procured the forged PAN card "in conspiracy with his father."

Azam walked out of Sitapur Jail on 23 September 23 nearly 23 months of incarceration.

BJP leader Akash Saxena had filed the case against Abdullah alleging fraud and violation of the Passport Act for allegedly obtaining the travel document using an incorrect date of birth. —*PTI*

BLOOD RUNS THICKER

Once sparring cousins, MNS Chief Raj Thackeray and Shiv Sena (UBT) Chief Uddhav Thackeray put their differences aside to attend a ceremony commemorating Bal Thackeray's 13th death anniversary, in Mumbai PHOTO: PTI

NO DECISION ON JOINING POPULAR MANIPUR GOVT: KUKI-ZO MLAS

IMPHAL, 17 NOV

Two Kuki MLAs of Manipur on Monday said that there has been no decision by the legislators of the community to join a popular government in the state.

Several Kuki-Zo organisations recently held a meeting in Guwahati to discuss the state's situation, but no decision was taken on the issue, Kuki Peoples' Alliance MLA Chinlunthang and independent legislator Haokholet Haokip said.

The media had reported that all the 10 Kuki Zo MLAs in the 60-member Manipur assembly have decided to join a popular government in place of the existing president's rule.

Following the ethnic clashes, the Kuki-Zo community people have been demanding a separate administration for the tribe. —*PTI*

Anomaly in EVMs, may move court: RJD on Bihar elections

PATNA, 17 NOV

The Bihar polls do not reflect the people's desire, the Opposition RJD alleged. The party said it may move the courts as there were "irregularities in the EVMs".

The RJD won only 25 out of the 143 seats it contested in the Bihar assembly elections. The BJP-led NDA had won 202 seats in the 243-member assembly.

"The mandate of the Bihar polls did not resonate with the situation on the ground. Despite the anger of the people towards the government, they have got such a mandate.

People and politicians are not able to digest this," RJD spokesperson Shakti Singh said.

All the RJD candidates who contested the polls attended the party meeting.

Senior leader and the party's former chief of the state unit, Jagdanand Singh, alleged: "Each EVM had 25,000 votes even before the polling began... and we still managed to win 25 seats".

This shows where the country is headed, he said.

RJD workers raised slogans against the party's Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Yadav, a close aide of Tejashwi Yadav, who was the chief ministerial candidate, of the INDIA bloc.

Rohini Acharya, alleged on Sunday that she was cursed at for donating a "dirty kidney" to her father, RJD Chief Lalu Prasad.

She also accused Sanjay of creating rift in the family, while alleging that a slipper was raised at her.

Tejashwi, Lalu, and other senior leaders like Rabri Devi were present at the meeting. —*PTI*

Newly elected RJD MLAs greet party Tejashwi Yadav after he was elected as the legislature party leader during a meeting, in Patna PHOTO: PTI

40% of new Bihar MLAs have no college degree. Women comprise 12% of total House strength

EAM in Russia for three-day visit

MOSCOW, 17 NOV

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Monday arrived in Russia on a three-day visit to attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Heads of State Council meeting.

At the airport, Jaishankar was received by Indian Ambassador Vinay Kumar and Alexei Pavlovsky, Director of the Second Asian Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia.

Later in the day, he will hold talks with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. They are expected to discuss bilateral, regional and international issues, including cooperation within the SCO, BRICS, the UN, and the G-20, state-run TASS news agency reported.

They are also likely to touch upon preparations for President Vladimir Putin's visit to New Delhi on 5 December.

On Tuesday, Jaishankar would represent Prime Minister Modi at the SCO meeting of the Prime Ministers' council, which is likely to be addressed by Putin.

Meanwhile, Putin's aide Nikolay Patrushev held talks with National Security Advisor Ajit Doval.

The talks largely focused on President Putin's visit to India early next month. Patrushev also met India's National Maritime Security Coordinator Vice Admiral Biswajit Dasgupta. —*PTI*

BJP DELAYS PALGHAR LEADER'S INDUCTION AFTER LYNCHING LINK

MUMBAI, 17 NOV

The Maharashtra BJP has put a temporary hold on the induction of Kashinath Choudhary, a leader from Palghar, who is accused of involvement in the 2020 mob lynching that resulted in the deaths of two sadhus. State BJP president Ravindra Chavan made the announcement following backlash over Choudhary's initial induction at a Palghar event.

In an official statement, the party noted that Choudhary's name does not feature in any FIR or chargesheet connected to the case. "However, given the seriousness of the matter, the decision regarding his induction has been temporarily halted at the state level," it stated.

On 16 April, 2020, the brutal lynching of two sadhus and their driver in Gadchinchale village occurred amid rumours of child abductions during the pandemic. —*PTI*

OPPN HOLDS CPI(M) RESPONSIBLE

BLOs boycott SIR work in Kerala after officer's suicide

T'PURAM/ CHENNAI, 17 NOV

Booth-Level Officers (BLOs) boycotted work of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise in Kerala following the alleged suicide of an officer.

Aneesh George, 44, a BLO in Payyannur, Kannur, was found hanging at his house on Sunday. Family members and residents alleged that he took the extreme step because of work-related pressure linked to the SIR exercise.

Various trade unions of state government employees, including the Action Council of State Government Employees and Teachers and the Joint Committee of Teacher Service Organisations, held protests at the Chief Electoral Officer's office in Thiruvanathapuram and district collectorates, demanding that authorities refrain from exerting excessive pressure on BLOs and postpone the SIR.

Kerala government employees under the banner of the Secretariat Action Council protest outside the Election Commission office in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala on Monday PHOTO: PTI

The Kerala NGO Association also staged protests across the state, demanding that SIR procedures be stopped to prevent further suicides.

Meanwhile, the body of George was handed over to his relatives after the post-mortem on Monday.

"He did not even get time to have food and sleep properly. He was under severe strain to complete work assigned as part of the SIR exercise," Saiju, George's brother-in-law, told reporters.

Leader of Opposition VD Satheesan said that a preliminary probe indicated that the role of CPI(M) workers in George's suicide should also be examined.

"We came to know that George was threatened after a Congress booth-level agent accompanied him for enumeration," he alleged. Satheesan alleged that both the BJP and CPI(M) were attempting to keep traditional Congress voters off the rolls.

"A majority of BLOs are women. There are around 700–1,200 voters in a booth, and BLOs have to visit each house multiple times to meet targets in a short period," he added.

Meanwhile, the members of the Federation of Associations of Revenue Employees of Tamil Nadu will boycott SIR work on 19 November. —*PTI*

EC orders 'Special Revision' list in Assam from 1 January

The Election Commission on Monday ordered 'Special Revision' of electoral rolls in Assam. According to instructions issued by the poll authority for the chief electoral officer of Assam, 1 January, 2026 will be the qualifying date for the state to carry out the Special Revision. The Special Revision stands somewhere between the annual special summary revision and the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.

Cong slams deletion of 27 L MGNREGA workers' names

NEW DELHI, 17 NOV

The Congress on Monday attacked the government over the reported deletion of nearly 27 lakh workers' names from the MGNREGA database between 10 October and 14 November this year, saying this is a "systematic attempt to end" the rural jobs scheme.

The opposition party also reiterated its demands, including a minimum MGNREGA wage of Rs 400 per day and an immediate halt to the mandatory adoption of exclusionary technology like Aadhaar-Based Payment System (ABPS), National Mobile Monitoring System (NMMS), and e-KYC.

Congress general secretary in charge of communications, Jairam Ramesh, shared on X a media report which claimed that the deletion of 27 lakh workers' names, far exceeding the 10.5 lakh additions during the same period.

This mass deletion of beneficiaries coincides with the introduction of the 'e-KYC' process for workers, he said.

Ramesh further said the Congress' demands have been consistent and include significant budget enhancement and stricter implementation of the policy on timely payment of wages to workers.

The Congress has also demanded the constitution of a standing committee to set MGNREGA wages in the future. —*PTI*

‘Gross contempt’ by T’gana Speaker: SC

Apex court questions Speaker’s inaction on BRS MLAs’ disqualification pleas

NEW DELHI, 17 NOV

The Supreme Court on Monday served a contempt notice to the Telangana Speaker Gaddam Prasad Kumar for failing to act on its directive to decide the defection cases of 10 Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) MLAs who joined the ruling Congress.

A bench led by Chief Justice BR Gavai had, on 31 July, ordered the Speaker to dispose of the disqualification petitions within three months.

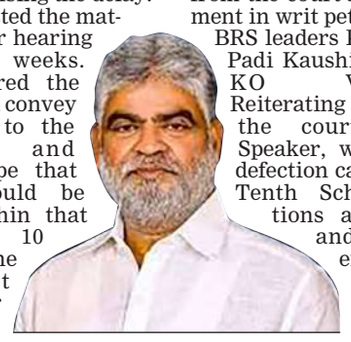
Calling the delay the “grossest kind of contempt”, the bench issued notices to the Speaker and other respondents but exempted them from personal appearance. It also sought responses on a plea from the Speaker’s office requesting an additional eight weeks to complete the process.

Senior advocates Mukul Rohatgi and Abhishek Singhvi, appearing with lawyer Sravan Kumar for the Speaker’s office, said they were seeking more time. One lawyer informed the court that hearings in four petitions are complete and evidence has closed in three others.

A bench led by CJI BR Gavai had earlier ordered the Speaker to dispose of the disqualification petitions within three months *PHOTO: PTI*

“This should have been concluded. This is the grossest kind of contempt. It is for him to decide where he wants to celebrate the New Year,” the CJI said, criticising the delay.

The bench listed the matters for further hearing after four weeks. Rohatgi assured the court he would convey its concerns to the Speaker and expressed hope that decisions would be delivered within that period. On 10 November, the top court agreed to hear on 17 November a plea seeking contempt action against the Speaker for non-compliance.



The contempt petition stems from the court’s 31 July judgment in writ petitions filed by BRS leaders KT Rama Rao, Padi Kaushik Reddy, and KO Vivekanand. Reiterating existing law, the court said the Speaker, while deciding defection cases under the Tenth Schedule, functions as a tribunal and therefore enjoys no constitutional immunity. *—PTI*

SC defer hearing on Sahara-Adani deal

NEW DELHI, 17 NOV

The Supreme Court on Monday postponed for six weeks the hearing on Sahara India Commercial Corporation Ltd’s plea seeking approval to sell 88 properties to Adani Properties.

A bench, comprising CJI BR Gavai, also asked the Centre to submit its reply to a note by amicus curiae Shekhar Naphade, who flagged several objections, including concerns over 34 assets.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said the Ministry of Cooperation should be added as many Sahara-linked cooperative societies may be impacted. The bench accordingly added the Ministry.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, for Sahara, said the group would respond to the note and alleged several sales were based on forged documents. The bench said such issues should be examined by a trial court or committee. The hearing is after six weeks. *—PTI*

SC cautions M’rashtra on 50% quota limit

NEW DELHI, 17 NOV

The Supreme Court on Monday told Maharashtra not to breach the 50 per cent reservation cap in next month’s local body elections, warning it would stay the polls if the ceiling was crossed.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and Joymalya Bagchi said elections must follow the pre-Banthia Commission framework, as the 2022 report recommending a 27 per cent OBC quota remains sub judice.

On Solicitor General Tushar Mehta’s request, the court listed the case for November 19 but directed the state to stay within the limit. “Don’t test the powers of this court,” the bench cautioned.

The court also notified petitions alleging reservations had touched 70 per cent in some areas, raising concerns over compliance with its earlier orders. *—PTI*

SC pushes Uttarakhand to restore Corbett

The Supreme Court on Monday directed the Uttarakhand government to start restoration work at Jim Corbett Tiger Reserve to reverse damage from tree felling and illegal constructions. A bench led by Chief Justice of India BR Gavai ordered the chief wildlife warden to work with the court-appointed Central Empowered Committee (CEC) to demolish all illegal structures within three months. The CEC will supervise the restoration plan. Stressing that tourism must remain eco-friendly, the court issued guidelines for the proposed tiger safari, including adherence to 2019 rules, rescue centres near safari zones, regulated movement and a three-month deadline for a tiger conservation plan. *—PTI*

UP stone quarry collapse: Death toll rises to six

CHENNAI, 17 NOV

The death toll from the Sonbhadra stone quarry collapse rose to six after five more bodies were recovered overnight. District Magistrate BN Singh identified the deceased as Indrajit, 30, his brother Santosh Yadav, 30, Ravindra alias Nanak, 18, Ramkhelavan, 32, and Kripashankar. Raju Singh, 30, was found on Sunday. Local MLA and UP minister Sanjeev Kumar Gond said around a dozen labourers may still be trapped. Rescue work is slowed by massive boulders, Additional DGP Piyush Mordia noted. Police were alerted on Saturday evening. The quarry owner and two partners have been booked. SP MP Chotelal Kharwar alleged illegal mining and sought Rs 50 lakh for affected families. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Varanasi cops book 28 for fake cough syrup trade

VARANASI, 17 NOV

The police have registered a case against 28 drug dealers, including a father-son duo, in Uttar Pradesh’s Varanasi for allegedly smuggling codeine-laced cough syrup for intoxication. An investigation by the Food Safety and Drug Administration Department revealed that Shubham Jaiswal, a resident of Prahlad Ghat, Varanasi, and his father, Bholanath Prasad, supplied large quantities of the banned adulterated syrup to 26 Varanasi-based businessmen from their Ranchi-based firm, Shaili Traders. The case was registered on a complaint by drug inspector Junab Ali in Varanasi. The 26 firms were inspected, and several were found to be closed. Calls to the numbers available on the firms’ portals were also not reachable. *—PTI*

Assam bans pig transport amid swine fever cases

GUWAHATI, 17 NOV

The Assam government has banned inter-district movement of live pigs with immediate effect, amid an “alarming” rise in cases of African Swine Fever (ASF) across the state, until further notice. Sale of pork was prohibited in seven districts, which have reported high concentrations of ASF cases, an order issued by the Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Department said. ASF, with a 100 per cent mortality rate, has devastated the piggery industry in the state.So far ASF 297 epicentres have been reported. These seven most affected districts are Dhemaji, Kamrup, Lakhimpur, Sivasagar, Darrang, Jorhat and Dibrugarh. The order said 84 epicentres were notified during the month of October alone. *—PTI*

Delhi cops busts Dubai-linked forex scam, 3 arrested

NEW DELHI, 17 NOV

In a significant crackdown, the Delhi Police have apprehended three individuals, including a sales manager from a private bank, linked to an interstate syndicate orchestrating a large-scale forex trading scam with handlers based in Dubai. The arrested are Anurag Kumar, a mule-account provider; Zeeshan Syed, the bank’s sales manager; and Himanshu Gupta, a key operative with a history of cheating and forgery. The gang allegedly created shell companies and opened multiple mule accounts to launder investment fraud proceeds. Victims were enticed through social media, lured by fabricated forex trading profits, leading them to deposit funds that were routed through accounts linked to entities like “Rebootz Sync Professionals Pvt Ltd.” Investigators suspect more may be involved. *—PTI*

Telangana Minister Mohammad Azharuddin consoles a kin of a victim who died in an accident in Saudi Arabia, in Hyderabad, on Monday *PHOTO: PTI*

18 of Hyd family die in Saudi crash

HYDERABAD, 17 NOV

Eighteen members of a Hyderabad family spanning three generations were killed in a fatal bus–tanker collision in Saudi Arabia while returning to Madina after performing Umrah, relatives said on Monday. The crash occurred around 1.30 am, and the bus burst into flames moments after impact.

The victims included retired railway employee Shaik Nazeeruddin, 70, his wife Akhter Begum, 62, their son Salauddin, 42, daughters Amina, 44, Rizwana, 38, and Shabana, 40, along with their children. In all, nine adults and nine children from the family died. Nazeeruddin’s other son, who lives in the US, was not part of the pilgrimage.

“We were in constant touch with them until the tragedy struck. The entire family has been wiped out,” said Mohammed Asif, a relative. Another family member, Mohammed Aslam, demanded a full probe into the cause of the collision and the role of the travel agency that arranged the trip.

At the family’s Ramnagar home, grief deepened as neighbours handed over the house keys—now a symbol of a residence without its members. “My brother’s entire family has been wiped out,” Nazeeruddin’s sister said, breaking down.

Amid the devastation, one Indian pilgrim survived. Mohd Abdul Shoiab, 24, also from Hyderabad, was seated near the driver and escaped the inferno. He is under treatment in a Saudi hospital, though his condition remains unclear. The crash reportedly claimed more than 40 Indian Umrah pilgrims, who were travelling from Mecca to Madina. *—Agencies*

NCW cites lapses in RG Kar rape probe

KOLKATA, 17 NOV

The National Commission for Women (NCW) on Monday heard 43 complainants, including the parents of the trainee doctor, who was raped and murdered at RG Kar Medical College, during the first day of its two-day ‘Maha Jansunwai’ in Kolkata to review cases of violence against women.

NCW member and physician Archana Majumdar said the commission would continue to support survivors who “keep knocking on every door for justice” while waiting months or years for meaningful action.

Majumdar said the victim’s parents remain distressed by the pace and transparency of the state police investigation. “Everyone knows what happened in the RG Kar case. Her helpless parents are being treated like shuttlecocks by state authorities. They pleaded before the NCW, and we believe it is our responsibility to ensure they get real justice,” she said, noting that only one person has been arrested so far. She criticised the police for what she described as poor communication and insufficient updates.

NCW member Archana Majumdar said the commission would continue to support survivors who wait for meaningful action *PHOTO: SCREENGRAB*

“They never upload this case on the portal. I held two virtual hearings with Deputy Commissioner–rank officers two or three months ago, but they could not give any substantial update,” she said.

She added that in an earlier hearing, police agreed to examine seven specific points raised by the NCW but have not submitted any action-taken report or shared requested documents, citing the matter as sub judice. Majumdar also expressed concern over alleged police apathy toward complainants.

She recalled that the victim’s mother was beaten during a march to Nabanna a year after the incident, yet no action has followed. She said another hearing on the RG Kar case, bringing together the family, police and investigating agencies, has been scheduled within 15 days.

“Even if the matter is before the Calcutta High Court, what can be done within the law must be done,” she said. The victim’s father, after meeting Majumdar, said neither the police nor the CBI had provided satisfactory answers. “Let’s see what reply Kolkata Police furnishes after 15 days,” he told PTI.

Majumdar said 117 cases were taken up through virtual and physical hearings, involving domestic violence, rape, molestation, cybercrimes and maternity benefit disputes, with 43 survivors appearing in person. She expects more than 150 complainants from Howrah and South 24 Parganas on Tuesday.

She added that the nature of cases emerging from Bengal, including assaults in several state-run medical facilities, reflects a “horrible situation” and urged immediate investigations. *—PTI*

HC okays shift of elephant to Vantara

MUMBAI, 17 NOV

The Kolhapur bench of the Bombay High Court has allowed the capture of Omkar, a wild elephant that strayed from its herd, and its temporary translocation to Vantara in Gujarat. A bench of Justices M S Karnik and Ajit Kadethankar directed that the operation be carried out with full precautions to avoid harm or stress, and said Vantara must ensure Omkar’s welfare with minimal human contact.

The order followed a PIL by Rohit Kamble, who opposed shifting Omkar outside Maharashtra, arguing that Vantara mainly houses captive elephants and is unsuitable for a wild one. He sought rehabilitation within Radhanagari Wildlife Sanctuary or another natural habitat.

PHOTO: VANTARA

The forest department said Omkar, around 10 years old, had entered Maharashtra from Karnataka during migration and roamed across Sindhudurg and Kolhapur, posing risks to life and property. Officials said it could not survive alone if released.

The court noted past incidents involving Omkar, including a man’s death in Dodamarg in April and a November episode where firecrackers were thrown at it. It said the move to Vantara was temporary and asked to submit plans to a Supreme Court-appointed committee within three days. *—PTI*

Mumbai CNG pumps see rush post supply disruption

MUMBAI, 17 NOV

Mumbai’s CNG pumps saw long queues on Monday after a major gas pipeline was damaged, disrupting supply to thousands of autorickshaws, taxis, and other CNG-run vehicles.

Several pumps remained shut since morning due to low pressure, a petrol dealers’ body representative said. Vehicles, including Ola and Uber taxis and some city buses, rely on CNG from Mahanagar Gas Limited (MGL).

MGL attributed the disruption to third-party damage to GAIL’s main pipeline inside Rashtriya Chemicals and Fertilisers (RCF) compound, affecting flow to its Wadala City Gate Station, a key Mumbai supply point. The city has 130–140 CNG pumps, including MGL’s. MGL prioritised residential supply to ensure uninterrupted piped gas to households and advised industrial and commercial consumers in affected areas to switch to alternate fuel until supply is restored. Officials said normal operations are expected by evening. *—PTI*

Dargahs among 10 structures razed in Gandhinagar

GANDHINAGAR, 17 NOV

At least two dargahs and several other illegal structures were demolished under heavy security here on Monday as authorities intensified a district-wide anti-encroachment drive.

The operation began around 5.30am, led by the Roads and Buildings and Revenue departments with support from nearly 200 police personnel, Assistant Superintendent of Police Ayush Jain said.

At least ten unauthorised constructions in Sector 30 were removed after notices were served.

Officials said the action is part of a larger clearance push across Sectors 1 to 30, where more than 1,400 houses and huts have been marked for demolition following poor response to eviction notices.

Residents expressed anger, demanding alternative accommodation.

In nearby Pethapur, authorities recently removed two Waqf-registered dargahs deemed illegal, along with hundreds of other encroachments.

Preparations are underway to target over 300 additional structures near GH-7 Circle, Press Circle and Sector 24 as the campaign continues to clear encroachments *—Agencies*

Hindu groups protest MBBS seat allocation ‘bias’

JAMMU, 17 NOV

Several Hindu groups protested on Monday at the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Institute of Medical Excellence in Reasi, demanding the revocation of the first MBBS seat-allocation list.

They sought a fresh admission process and revised rules to ensure adequate reservation for Hindus in the shrine-funded institution.

Controversy erupted after 42 of the 50 allotted seats went to students from one community.

Rakesh Bajrangi, president of the Rashtriya Bajrang Dal, said, “Of the first batch, only seven are Hindus and one Sikh, while 42 are Muslims, which is not acceptable to us.”

Vikram Singh, former Yuva Rajput Sabha president, warned of intensified protests unless LG Manoj Sinha intervenes in the matter. *—PTI*

Sabarimala rituals begin amid BJP signature drive

SABARIMALA, 17 NOV

Hundreds of devotees thronged Lord Ayyappa Temple, Sabarimala, on Monday, the first day of Vrischikam, marking the Mandalam-Makaravilakku season.

Dressed in black and carrying irumudikkettu, pilgrims queued from early morning as newly appointed melsanthi ED Prasad Namboothiri opened the sanctum in the presence of tantri Kantararu Mahesh Mohanaru. Key rituals were performed as long queues filled the nadapandal and sacred steps. The Travancore Devaswom Board capped daily entry at 90,000 via virtual and spot booking. Amid the turnout, Kerala BJP launched a signature drive urging PM Narendra Modi to act on the Sabarimala gold loss case. State secretary S Suresh said one crore signatures are sought to “protect Sabarimala,” accusing past governments of failing shrine accountability after 2019 gold-plating discrepancies led to arrests, including ex-TDB president N Vasu. *—PTI*

FOR 3 YEARS

UP woman alive in reality, dead on paper

ALIGARH, 17 NOV

For three years, 58-year-old Saroj Devi has been ‘dead,’ at least in official records. The clerical error, triggered in 2022 when she applied for her husband’s death certificate, left her trapped in bureaucratic limbo.

Officials mistakenly issued her own death certificate on January 1, 2022, deactivating her Aadhaar and cutting her off from essential services linked to identity verification.

Saroj Devi, a resident of Chamar Nagaria village in Khair tehsil, had lost her husband, Jagdish Prasad, in 2020. Seeking closure, she approached authorities for formal documentation, only to face an ordeal she says was amplified by “official apathy” and repeated visits to government offices. Despite her efforts, the error remained uncorrected, leaving her unable to access welfare benefits, financial services or basic entitlements.

Her case gained attention on 15 November when she raised the matter during a Tehsil Diwas grievance forum, pleading with senior officials to restore her identity. She told them she had been trying for years to reverse the mistake, but “administrative laxity” stalled the process at every stage. Khair Sub-Divisional Magistrate Shishir Kumar acknowledged the lapse and said the administration is now treating the matter as a priority. “The issue is being rectified with urgency,” he said, assuring that the necessary corrections are underway and should be completed soon.

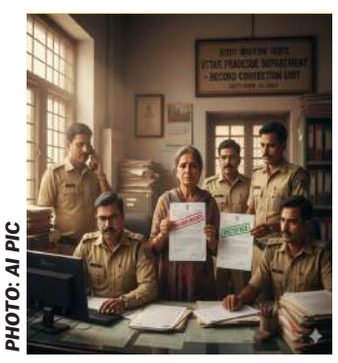


PHOTO: AI PIC

For Saroj Devi, the renewed administrative response offers hope that she will be “alive” again on official records, ending an ordeal that erased her existence on paper for three years. *—PTI*

Rahul should stop taking advice from NGO-type people: BJP MLA Arvind Bellad

Without Modi, BJP cannot win elections, says Deputy Leader of the Opposition in Karnataka Assembly

SALAR UPCLOSE

NAHEED ATAULLA

Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Karnataka Legislative Assembly and BJP MLA representing Hubballi–Dharwad West, Arvind Chandrakant Bellad, is seen as a youth icon of the party. If not for internal opposition in the BJP, Bellad would have made it to the post of Chief Minister in 2021 after BS Yediyurappa stepped down. In an interview with Salar Upclose, Bellad opens up on his party's functioning, the Lingayat community's support and his political future

1.Did you undertake the recently concluded socio-educational survey which was opposed by some BJP leaders including Union Minister Pralhad Joshi and BJP MP Tejesvi Surya, who said they will not participate?

I think any kind of government survey, if done with good intention, we need to take part. I took part in the socio-educational survey because I thought it is important that the State actually finds out what the exact status of different people is.

The reason for Joshi and Surya opposing the survey is because of the intention behind the survey. If the intention is actually to find out the socio-economic status, anyway the Central government has a mandate to carry out the census. They are going to conduct it in another six months. So there was no need to spend hundreds of crores of State money when the State was already short of funds.

The whole idea behind Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's survey was to show that certain communities have a lesser percentage of population and to consolidate his position in the party. We all know Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar is aiming for his seat.

Siddaramaiah's idea was to create confusion among Lingayats, Vokkaligas, and other communities and show that their numbers are not as high as people believe. He wanted to claim that minorities and other backward classes are more in numbers and therefore he should continue to lead the party, instead of handing over the position to Shivakumar.

2.While BJP State President BY Vijayendra clarified that the party had not taken an official stand to boycott the survey, he advised all Hindu communities to declare themselves as Hindu in the religion column. This was a move seen as a counter to calls from some Lingayat leaders to use the others category? What was your stand?

Like in other communities, among Lingayats too there are extreme fundamentalists. If you look at 12th century social reformer Basavanna's philosophy and Lingayat philosophy, it's nothing but Hinduism. Basavanna ended each of his Vachanas with the name of Kudala Sangama Deva, another name for Shiva.

Another social reformer Akka Mahadevi ended hers with Sri Channamallikarjuna. Devara Dasimaayya, one of the Sharanas (devotees) from a backward community, ended his Vachanas with Ramanatha, taking the names of Ram and Eshwar together.

Hinduism believes in numerous gods. You can follow whichever deity is close to your heart. Some people want to project Basavanna as a radical neo-religious figure. They want to claim his teachings are separate from Hinduism. This is being encouraged by Siddaramaiah. This is a ploy by Siddaramaiah and his Leftist ideology friends, which is why we had to take a stand.

3.Chief minister Siddaramaiah has accused the BJP of stalling the caste census because of its discomfort with caste-based data which has denied rightful opportunities to the marginalised groups by bypassing reservations through privatisation and lateral entry? For the BJP, according to Siddaramaiah the other backward classes are "mere symbols" rather than equals.

He has done only lip service for the people. Why didn't Siddaramaiah implement the socio-economic survey done in 2015, he was the chief minister from 2013 to 2018? He has tried to create confusion in the current survey. He tried to introduce Lingayat Christian, Panchamasali Christian and Banajiga Christian. In Islam or Christianity, they do not believe in caste. There is only one religion. Why create caste groups here?

4.You represent the key subsect of the Lingayat community which is unhappy with the Congress government delaying their inclusion in the reservation category from the present 3 B and secondly you have said the reservation quota earmarked for the Christians and Muslims should be given to the Panchamsalis?

The Panchamsalis wanted from 3B to 2D. The Constitution is very clear that reservation should be based on caste not religion. BR Ambedkar said reservation should be based on caste, not religion. Islam and Christianity do not follow caste. So there is no question of giving caste-based reservation to these religions. My proposal was that the reservation currently given to Muslims and Christians—which is constitutionally questionable—can instead be given to communities deprived of adequate reservation like Marathas, Vokkaligas and Lingayats.

5. The BJP central leadership has banked heavily on the Lingayat community for votes, however in recent elections players from other communities like the Vokkaligas and the scheduled castes have been favouring the party? Has this undermined the importance of the community?

Not at all. For the BJP to come to power, we need the support of all communities. And Lingayats importance has not come down. That thought itself is not there in the party. Things will change slowly. Earlier, the backward communities, scheduled castes and tribes, even the Lingayats were not with the BJP. They have all joined because misconceptions about BJP's ideology are clearing. The BJP's ideology is: Nation first, party next, individual last. Eventually, minorities and other communities will also understand this.

6.Your party does not give tickets to the minorities and when tickets are not given, how do you expect them to vote for the BJP?

Tickets are given to winnable candidates. Our Muslim candidates are not winning. We need Muslim candidates who can win. In Karnataka, my party made Prof Mumtaz Ali Khan a minister, so it is not that Muslims are not accepted. In my constituency, my father gave corporation tickets to Muslim candidates multiple times, but they lost miserably, even in Muslim dominated areas.

7.Former chief minister BS Yediyurappa, who played a big role in building the BJP in Karnataka, was the only Lingayat face of the community all these years? Who are the emerging leaders from the community now?

Yediyurappa is a tall Lingayat leader and so are former chief ministers Basavaraj Bommai and Jagadish Shettar. BJP State unit President BY Vijayendra and myself are also Lingayat leaders

8. You were among the top front runners when the BJP central leadership was looking for a successor after Yediyurappa stepped down as the chief minister in 2021. As reports suggested, if Yediyurappa had not opposed your candidature, you would have been the chief minister in place of Basavaraj Bommai? Can you share what transpired that you were also not taken in the cabinet of Basavaraj Bommai?

I really don't know what transpired and only learnt from the media that my name was being considered. The High Command decided on Basavaraj Bommai as he was more experienced and would take everyone along. And he did.

9. As an alumnus of INSEAD business school in France and considered to have a progressive vision about development, you are being groomed by a section of the RSS as the future face of the BJP in Karnataka, but Yediyurappa apparently views you as a threat to his son and State BJP president BY Vijayendra? Comment.

Politics is a long race. In INSEAD, we had a professor named Henry Mintzberg, who was nominated for the Nobel Prize twice. His theory was: "Life is about shoot and aim, not aim and shoot." You are given a responsibility, you do it, and then improve. If you're lucky you hit the bulls eye; if not, you still grow.

I believe in that theory. Party gave me responsibilities and I worked. People rewarded me with higher margins in subsequent elections.

So whatever responsibility the party gives, I will work sincerely. Whatever has to happen will happen.

> **There's an Urdu and Kannada medium school in my constituency and both are separated by a compound wall. This has troubled me because even after speaking to the heads of both schools they don't want to bring the compound wall down. If the wall is demolished children can study together. Of the six subjects, three subjects; science, mathematics and social studies are common and children of both Urdu and Kannada mediums can study together. This will save the public exchequer's money as teachers for these subjects have been recruited for both schools. When children are growing up they should learn each other's culture. My intervention has not helped in breaking the compound wall as the schools head contention is they are two separate institutions**
>
> -Arvind C Bellad, BJP MLA

10.Do you have hopes of making it big in future as the BJP central leadership is known to spring surprises by picking unknown and fresh faces for the chief minister's post, which was the case in Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh?

I have ideas about development and bringing people together. If the party gives me responsibility, I can deliver.

11.Can you elaborate on your statements that the BJP has to stay united if it has to come to power in the next Assembly elections and the present internal bickering cannot continue?

We still have a long way to go. But there is now a realisation that we must come together. This realisation itself is a big step. I'm sure it will help us put up a stronger fight.

12.What's your take on the Congress vote chori campaign?

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi needs to listen to the real political leaders. He should stop listening to these NGO kinds of people who have no understanding of the politics or real issues troubling the people. People will not buy these kinds of strategies like 'vote chori'.

We all know there will be some discrepancies in voters' lists. In my election, there is a place called Nanagar which is a 95 per cent BJP area. Some 600 odd votes were missing.

The Special Intensive Registration (SIR) is a process of cleaning up the system and if someone's name has appeared in two or three booths, this process will eliminate it.

On one hand, he opposes one name appearing multiple times in the list and on the other is against SIR. There is no stuff in what he is opposing.

It's high time Rahul Gandhi starts listening to real issues of people because people will not respond to issues that are created.

Sometimes I feel bad for him that even after so many years, he is not able to win for his party.

13. A year ago you had called out IT giant Infosys for failing to provide job opportunities after getting subsidised land in Bengaluru, Mysuru, and Mangaluru apart from 58 acres in Hubballi, where according to you only gardening and landscaping was done. Have things improved after that?

Yes, it worked. Infosys has now recruited around 1,500 people in the Hubballi campus. The campus has a capacity for 3,000 in a single shift. I'm sure they will reach that number soon.

14. How are pilot projects in your Hubballi- Dharwad West constituency of LKG and UKG pre-school in government institutions after you noticed a dip in the school attendance and a mobile phone app to listen to grievances of your voters' going?

In 2014, I launched a constituency management app—the first of its kind in the country. It allowed complaint tracking, data on wards, streets, turn around time etc. But people prefer calling me directly or meeting me personally. So the app exists, but people don't use it much.

I studied in a private school and did not know much about government institutions. I visited a government for the first time after becoming an MLA. When I asked the school principal about the students' strength in the lower and upper kindergarten, he said they don't have it. Parents were sending their children by auto rickshaws and buses to other schools.

I said when parents are able to spend money on transportation, why not start LKG/UKG here. I discussed with other school principals and space was made to start kindergarten classes in 70 per cent of the schools.

We documented the experiment and sent it to the government to take it up as a project. The finance department turned it down saying Anganwadis are there to take care of these children. The credit goes to former chief minister HD Kumaraswamy, who started thousands of such schools.

15. Opposition Leader R Ashoka and you are perceived to be soft on the government, when it comes to taking on issues?

As I said, we need to put up a much stronger fight. We have been doing it in the earlier Assembly sessions. Ashoka is generally soft by nature and is not harsh in his choice of words. But he is doing a good job.

16. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is being credited with every election the BJP has been winning since 2014. Are there no other charismatic leaders apart from him?

Modi is a charismatic leader. When he is there and winning elections for us, why worry?

17. But where is the individuality of party leaders in Karnataka?

Individuals naturally benefit through Modi. The BJP gets votes in Modi's name as people have belief in his ethics and working system.

18. Minus Modi the party cannot win?

No. As of now we are winning because of Modi. He is our biggest campaigner. Whatever wins are happening is because of Modi and his leadership.

—Salar News

Watch the full interview on our Salar YouTube channel.

LETTERS

write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

The rise and fall of Bangladesh's 'Iron Lady' Sheikh Hasina

For nearly two decades, Sheikh Hasina's name moved with the pulse of Bangladesh, sometimes steady, sometimes storm-tossed.

To her supporters, she is the architect of a modern, developing Bangladesh; to her critics, she was an autocrat whose appetite for power blinded her to the cries of the streets.

Few, however, could have imagined that the very tribunal the 77-year-old deposed prime minister once created to try hardened war collaborators would one day place her in the dock.

On Monday, when the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) pronounced the death sentence against Hasina in absentia, it marked the most dramatic turn yet in the story of the world's longest-serving female head of government.

Hasina was born on 28 September, 1947, in Tungipara in the then East Pakistan, into a family that would come to define Bangladesh's identity. Her father, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, led Bangladesh to independence with India's help in 1971 and became its founding father.

She studied at the University of Dhaka, earning a master's degree in Bengali literature, and became deeply engaged in student politics.

In 1968, Hasina married nuclear scientist MA Wazed Miah, whose low-profile, scholarly life stood in contrast to the turbulence of Bangladeshi politics.

Wazed remained a steady presence in Hasina's life until he died in 2009 at the age of 67. They have a son, Sajeeb Wazed Joy and a daughter, Saima Wazed Putul.

Hasina's political destiny hardened after the August 1975 military coup, in which her father, mother, three brothers, and several other family members were assassinated. She and her younger sister Rehana survived only because they were abroad.

India, under then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, granted her asylum. After six years, in May 1981, Hasina returned to Bangladesh, where she was elected in absentia as the general secretary of the Awami League.

When Hasina returned in 1981 to lead the Awami League, she found her rival already waiting: Khaleda Zia, widow of slain president Ziaur Rahman.

The 'Battling Begums', as they came to be known, fought electoral and ideological wars that defined Bangladesh's politics for more than three decades.

Hasina first became prime minister in 1996, defeating Zia in a fiercely contested election. She lost power in 2001 but returned with a landslide in 2008, beginning, what her critics say, a long stretch of dominance.

Under her leadership, the Awami League swept the 2008 general election; the 2014 election, which was boycotted by Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP); and the 2018 election, giving Hasina one of the world's longest tenures for a female leader.

During her premiership, Bangladesh saw rapid economic growth, major infrastructure achievements like the Padma Bridge, and advances in poverty reduction.

The country also became a global garment powerhouse under her watch.

But the accolades came alongside accusations of clampdowns on dissent, curbs on the media, arrests of opposition leaders and the expansion of state security powers.

In 2024, student-led demonstrations, which initially erupted in protest over quotas in government jobs for children of independence war veterans, later exploded into a nationwide uprising against Hasina's regime.

The crackdown that followed unleashed spirals of violence, ultimately ousting Hasina from power and forcing her to flee to India.

Following Hasina's ouster, the interim government led by Muhammad Yunus reconstituted the ICT, once her instrument for prosecuting war criminals, to bring charges of crimes against humanity related to the 2024 crackdown against her.

A UN rights office report estimated that up to 1,400 people were killed during last year's student protest between July 15 and August 15 during what came to be known as the July Uprising, as her government ordered a sweeping security crackdown.

On Monday, after months of proceedings she never attended, the tribunal handed down the unthinkable: Hasina, four-time prime minister and political heir of Bangladesh's founding leader, was sentenced to death. Now, in exile in India, Hasina, often dubbed the 'Iron Lady' of Bangladesh, watches. *—PTI*

After shutdown ends, US flights to return to normal

WASHINGTON, 17 NOV

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) announced on Sunday that all restrictions on American commercial flights would be lifted, with regular schedules set to resume Monday at 11am GMT. These restrictions affected 40 of the US's busiest airports, including New York, Washington DC, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Atlanta, during the longest government shutdown in US history, which raised concerns about staffing shortages. According to aviation analytics firm Cirium, just 0.25 per cent of flights at these airports were cancelled on 16 November, marking an improvement from previous days. Transport Secretary Sean Duffy said on X, "Normal flight operations can resume after days of positive staffing." *—Agencies*

Gunmen abduct 25 Nigerian schoolgirls

WASHINGTON, 17 NOV

Armed assailants attacked a high school in Kebbi state, northwestern Nigeria, early on Monday, abducting 25 schoolgirls and killing one staff member. The incident occurred at 4.00am, with gunmen reportedly armed with "sophisticated weapons" exchanging fire with guards before taking the girls from their dormitories, stated police spokesperson Nafi'u Abubakar Kotarkoshi. No group has claimed responsibility for the attack, part of a troubling trend in Nigeria's northern region, which has long been plagued by school abductions. Kotarkoshi added, "A combined team is currently combing suspected escape routes and surrounding forests in a coordinated search and rescue operation." Since 2014, armed groups have kidnapped at least 1,500 students. *—PTI*

Protesters shout slogans outside the demolished residence of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Bangladesh's former leader and father of ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina, in Dhaka Monday **PHOTO: PTI**

Hasina rejects 'rigged' ICT verdict

Former HM also sentenced to death

NEW DELHI/DHAKA, 17 NOV

Sentenced to death after a trial in absentia in Bangladesh, a defiant Sheikh Hasina on Monday charged that the judgement has been made by a "rigged tribunal" established and presided over by an "unelected government with no democratic mandate".

The 78-year-old Awami League leader, who has been living in India since she was deposed as prime minister of Bangladesh on 5 August last year following massive violent protests, said the "politically motivated" verdict reveals the "brazen and murderous intent of extremist figures".

"I wholly deny the accusations that have been made against me in the ICT," Hasina said after she was sentenced to death on Monday by the country's International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) for "crimes against humanity" over her government's crackdown on student-led protests last year.

She was earlier declared a fugitive by the court.

In its verdict, the ICT described her as the "mastermind and principal architect" of the violent repression that killed hundreds of protesters.

Former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, was also Monday sentenced to death in absentia by the tribunal for crimes against humanity during last year's student uprising. Kamal is also believed to be living in India.

"They are biased and politically motivated. In their distasteful call for the death penalty, they reveal the brazen and murderous intent of extremist figures within the interim government to remove Bangladesh's last elected prime minister, and to nullify the Awami League as a political force," Hasina said.

She said she was not afraid to face her "accusers" in a proper tribunal.

The verdict comes months before parliamentary elections in Bangladesh. Hasina's Awami League party has been barred from contesting.

She said millions of Bangladeshis were living under the "chaotic, violent and socially-regressive" administration of Mohammad Yunus. She said religious minorities, including Hindus were being targeted in Bangladesh.

Meanwhile, violence erupted in Bangladesh.

Security agencies, including the army, police and RAB, used batons, fired tear gas and sound grenades to disperse protesters who tried to demolish the house of Hasina's father and Bangladesh's founder Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in Dhaka. *—PTI*

'I don't care, release the Epstein files!' Trump says

US President Donald Trump with Jeffrey Epstein **PHOTO: X**

WASHINGTON, 17 NOV

President Donald Trump said House Republicans should vote to release the files in the Jeffrey Epstein case, a startling reversal after previously fighting the proposal a growing number of those in his own party supported it.

"We have nothing to hide, and it's time to move on from this Democrat Hoax perpetrated by Radical Left Lunatics in order to deflect from the Great Success of the Republican Party," Trump wrote on his Truth Social late Sunday.

Trump's statement followed a fierce fight within the GOP over the files, including an increasingly nasty split with Georgia Rep Marjorie Taylor Greene, who had long been one of his fiercest supporters.

The President's shift is an implicit acknowledgement that supporters of the measure have enough votes to pass it the House, although it has an unclear future in the Senate.

"I DON'T CARE!" Trump wrote in his social media post. "All I do care about is that Republicans get BACK ON POINT."

Lawmakers who support the bill have been predicting a big win in the House this week with a "deluge of Republicans" voting for it, bucking the GOP leadership and the president.

The bill would force the Justice Department to release all files and communications related to Epstein, as well as any information about the investigation into his death in federal prison. Information about Epstein's victims or ongoing federal investigations would be allowed to be redacted. *—PTI*

'WILLING TO TALK TO VENEZUELA PREZ'

Trump said the US may hold discussions soon with Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, after a military buildup near the South American country, "I'll talk to anybody," Trump said. His comments come the USS Gerald R Ford – US largest aircraft carrier – and other warships arrived in the Caribbean. Washington has killed at least 80 "narco-terrosists" in the Caribbean and Pacific since September.

'WILL MEET MAMDANI TO WORK IT OUT'

Trump indicated on Sunday that he plans to meet New York City's mayor-elect Zohran Mamdani and said they'll "work something out," in what could be a détente for the Republican President and Democratic political star. Trump and Mamdani have had a constant war of words, painting each other as political foils.

Don warns of 500% tariffs over Russian oil

NEW YORK/ WASHINGTON, 17 NOV

US President Donald Trump has warned that any country that does business with Russia will be "very severely sanctioned", as his administration and Republican lawmakers push ahead with tough legislation targeting Moscow.

A bill introduced by Senator Lindsey Graham has proposed a 500 per cent tariff on secondary purchase and reselling of Russian oil. The proposal has near-unanimous backing in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Responding to questions from reporters on Sunday on whether it was time for Congress to pass measures aimed at pressuring Russia and President Vladimir Putin, Trump said, "I hear they're doing that, and that's okay with me."

"They're passing legislation... the Republicans are putting in legislation... very tough sanctioning... on any country doing business with Russia. They may add Iran to that... I suggested it," he said. "So any country that does business with Russia will be very severely sanctioned."

The Trump administration has imposed 50 per cent tariffs on India, among the highest in the world, including 25 per cent levies for its purchases of Russian energy. *—PTI*

Pak's Jaffar Express narrowly escapes explosion

KARACHI, 17 NOV

The frequently-targeted Jaffar Express passenger train narrowly escaped an explosion in Pakistan's Balochistan province, a day after it resumed operations following nearly a week of suspension due to security concerns. Insurgents targeted the train in the Nasirabad area of the province on 16 November, months after it came under a deadly insurgent attack by the banned Balochistan Liberation Army that left 26 people dead. Suspected insurgents detonated explosives planted on the railway track on the route taken by the Jaffar Express from Quetta to Peshawar. The explosion caused damage to a portion of the track, but the train escaped without any damage. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

Japanese woman marries Chat-GPT generated partner

HOUSTON, 17 NOV

A 32-year-old Japanese woman has drawn global attention after marrying her ChatGPT-generated partner. Kano married the artificial intelligence companion, whom she named Lune Klaus, in Okayama, Japan. "I didn't marry a machine — I married the warmth he brings into my life," says Kano. Although the wedding ceremony carried no legal legitimacy, Kano affirms, "He may live in my phone, but the comfort he brings is real." The phenomenon reflects Japan's social culture, where long working hours, shrinking social circles, and declining marriage rates have affected traditional relationships. Technology commentators have coined the term AI psychosis, describing individuals who believe that AI is sentient, resulting in romantic bonds. *—Agencies*

Hamas slams US proposal for Gaza ahead of UN vote

JERUSALEM, 17 OCT

Hamas-led groups in Gaza on Monday rejected the "dangerous" resolution submitted by the US to the UN Security Council (UNSC) that would create a stabilisation force to oversee its demilitarisation.

The UNSC is set to vote on both the US proposal and Russia's counter proposal on Monday.

The statement, made by of Hamas on behalf of itself and other groups in Gaza, said the Palestinian factions reject any clause relating to the disarmament of Gaza or harming "the Palestinian people's right to resistance," blasting what it said is "an attempt to subject the Gaza Strip to international authority."

The statement also rejects the idea of deploying international troops in Palestinian territory.

The US proposal in the UN pushed Trump's 20-point ceasefire plan, which includes several contentious clauses including the disarming of Hamas and other groups as well as setting up an international peacekeeping force in the region.

Russia criticise Washington's proposal, saying it doesn't push for a two-state solution and has tabled its own ceasefire plan for Gaza in the UN.

However, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has consistently rejected the two-state solution. On Sunday, he vowed to oppose any such proposal in the UNSC. *—Agencies*

A Palestinian man carries bags of firewood after collecting them from the rubbish in Khan Younis, southern Gaza Strip **PHOTO: PTI**

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and French President Emmanuel Macron in Paris on Monday **PHOTO: X @EMMANUELMACRON**

Ukraine to buy 100 French Rafale jets

PARIS, 17 NOV

Ukraine signed a letter of intent to buy up to 100 Rafale warplanes from France, the Ukrainian Embassy and the French president's office said.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and French President Emmanuel Macron signed the document on Monday stating that Ukraine is considering the possibility of buying French defence equipment, including Rafale jet fighters, Macron's office said. It did not provide further details.

Zelenskyy is on his ninth visit to Paris since Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022. His talks are meant to strengthen Ukraine's defences as the country enters another winter under Russian bombardment of its energy infrastructure. *—PTI*

Chile's Prez polls headed to tense runoff

SANTIAGO, 17 NOV

A hard-right former lawmaker and admirer of US President Donald Trump held the upper hand as Chile headed to a polarising presidential runoff against a member of Chile's Communist Party representing the incumbent government.

Jose Antonio Kast, an ultra-conservative lawyer opposed to abortion and same-sex marriage, came in second with 42 per cent of votes after nearly 70 per cent of votes went to right-wing candidates in the first round.

Leftist Jeannette Jara and far-right Jose Antonio Kast vote in Chile **PHOTO: X**

He campaigned on plans to crack down on crime, build a giant border wall and deport thousands of undocumented migrants.

Jeannette Jara, a former labor minister in President Gabriel Boric's left-wing government, led with 27 per cent of the vote, promising to expand Chile's social safety net and tackle money laundering and drug trafficking.

Neither contender received over 50 per cent of the total votes, necessitating a second round of voting on 14 December. *—PTI*

AT LEAST 40 KILLED IN CONGO BRIDGE COLLAPSE

BUKAVU, 17 NOV

Overcrowding causes bridge collapse in Kalando mine in the southeastern province of Democratic Rebublic of Congo (DRC). At least 32 people have been confirmed dead, states Lualaba's interior minister Roy Kaumba Mayonde.

A government agency report, stated that gunfire from soldiers at the site sparked panic among the miners who rushed to the bridge resulting in the fall that left them "piled on top of each other causing the deaths and injuries."

While Mayonde puts the death toll at 32, the report states at least 40 were killed.

The miners rushed across the flooded trench using a makeshift bridge.

"Despite strict prohibition on accessing the site due to heavy rainfall and the risk of landslides,"- Mayonde said.

Congo is the world's largest producer of cobalt, used to make lithium-ion batteries commonly used in electric vehicles. However, unsafe conditions, corruption and Chinese involvement plague the country's mining industry.

Accusations of child labour, unsafe conditions, and corruption have long plagued the country's mining industry.

Mineral-rich eastern Congo has for decades been ripped apart by violence from government forces and different armed groups, including the Rwanda-backed M23, whose recent resurgence has escalated the conflict, worsening an already acute humanitarian crisis. *—PTI*

TRANS-CONTINENT

Now, 'One Piece' a Gen Z symbol in Mexico

MEXICO CITY, 17 NOV

As Mexico protesters rattled the government, they hung a manga flag showing a skull wearing a straw hat. The juxtaposition of the cartoon flag with the protests may have seemed bizarre, but for the Gen Z protesters who filled the streets of Mexico, the gesture was full of meaning.

The flag comes from the wildly popular 1997 Japanese manga 'One Piece' by Eciichiro Oda, which tells the swashbuckling story of the charming pirate captain Monkey D Luffy and his misfit "Straw Hat" crew. Together, they set sail under a Jolly Roger flag that wears Luffy's quintessential straw hat. It was a adapted into an anime in 1999.

To 'One Piece' fans, the flag symbolises Luffy's quest to chase his dreams, liberate oppressed people, and fight the autocratic World Government. He's fearless and determined – with a few tricks up his sleeve to thwart opponents, including the enviable ability to evade capture with a rubber body that stretches, bounces and bends.

Demonstrations in Mexico were organised by the GenZ against rising crime, corruption and impunity. In Mexico City, a small group of hooded protesters tore down fences around the National Palace where President Claudia Sheinbaum lives, prompting a clash with riot police.

The 'One Piece' flag has popped up in Gen Z protests across the world, most notably in Nepal, Morocco and Madagascar. *—ANI*

Mexico's GenZ protests erupted after the death of a Mayor **PHOTO: X**

PHOTO: AI

Gold rises Rs 300 to Rs 1.29 per 10g amid global trends

MUMBAI, 17 NOV

Gold prices increased by Rs 300 to Rs 1,29,700 per 10gm in Delhi on Monday, driven by steady trends in international markets. The 99.5 per cent pure gold also saw a rise of Rs 300, reaching Rs 1,29,100 after taxes. Meanwhile, silver prices fell by Rs 1,000 to Rs 1,63,800 per kilogram.

In international markets, spot gold remained stable at USD 4,077.35 per ounce, while spot silver rose by 0.66 per cent to USD 50.89 an ounce. Praveen Singh, Head of Commodities at Mirae Asset ShareKhan, noted, "A firmer dollar caps the upside, while Sino-Japan tensions cushion the downside." Renisha Chainani, Head of Research at Augmont, highlighted last week's market sell-off triggered by hawkish US Federal Reserve comments. *—PTI*

Rupee edges up 3P to settle at 88.63 against USD

MUMBAI, 17 NOV

The rupee recovered from intraday losses to close 3 paise higher at 88.63 against the US dollar on Monday, supported by firm domestic equities and softer global crude prices. Forex traders said gains were capped by a stronger greenback overseas and continued foreign fund outflows. The currency opened at 88.70, moved between 88.56 and 88.73, and settled marginally above Friday's close of 88.66. The dollar index rose 0.29 per cent to 99.29, while Brent crude fell 0.81 per cent to USD 63.87 per barrel. The Sensex gained 388 points to 84,950.95 and the Nifty rose 103 points to 26,013.45. Government data showed exports fell 11.8 per cent in October, while imports jumped 16.63 per cent, widening the trade deficit to USD 41.68 billion. FIIs sold equities worth Rs 4,968 crore on Friday. *—PTI*

Govt imposes import curbs on platinum jewels

NEW DELHI, 17 NOV

The Indian government has imposed import restrictions on certain types of platinum jewellery, effective immediately until 30 April 2026. This follows similar restrictions on silver jewellery imports announced in September. The move intends to mitigate the importation of silver presented as unstudded jewellery from Thailand, which benefits from India's free trade agreement with ASEAN. The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) has revised the import policy of platinum jewellery from free to restricted. Importers are now required to obtain a licence from the DGFT for these imports, with the changes aimed at strengthening the domestic market. *—PTI*

BCCL urged to fill director vacancies for listing

NEW DELHI, 17 NOV

Sources reveal that Bharat Coking Coal Ltd (BCCL), a subsidiary of Coal India Ltd, must promptly fill six vacant independent director positions to expedite its listing process. In May, BCCL submitted its draft red herring prospectus (DRHP) to SEBI and stock exchanges for an initial public offering. The coal ministry has informed Cabinet Secretary TV Somanathan about these vacancies, crucial for completing the listing. SEBI mandates that all independent directors must be appointed before filing the final Red Herring Prospectus. The IPO, part of the government's divestment strategy, aims to enhance transparency and unlock value in the coal sector, which is dominated by Coal India, accounting for over 80 per cent of domestic output. *—PTI*

17 electronics projects worth ₹7,172 cr get govt nod

These projects will lead to production worth Rs 65,111 crore

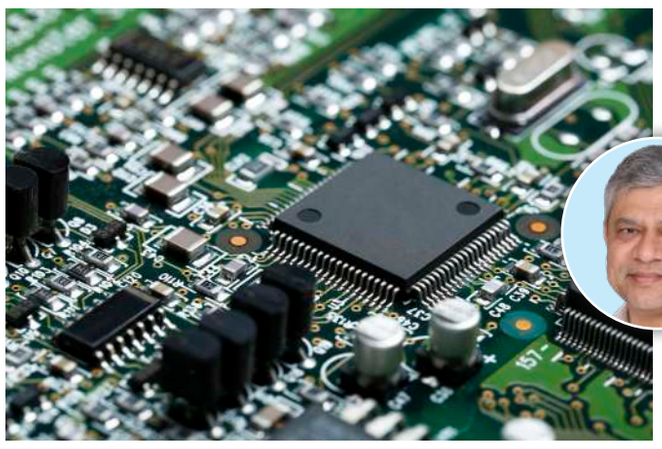
NEW DELHI, 17 NOV

The government on Monday approved 17 projects entailing about Rs 7,172 cr investment across six categories under the Electronics Component Manufacturing Scheme (ECMS), underlining India's resolve and its decisive push into producing high-value components.

These projects will lead to production worth Rs 65,111 crore cumulatively.

"You have shown the way on how India will become major electronics manufacturing hub," Minister for Electronics and IT, Ashwini Vaishnaw said at an event announcing the second tranche of approvals.

To achieve long-term success, India will have to focus on building design teams, ensuring six sigma quality standards in all products, and partnering with 'Swadeshi' suppliers in projects.



India will have to focus on building design teams and ensuring six sigma quality standards in all products *PHOTO: FREEPIK*

Quality systems will be key part of evaluation process, the minister added.

"The way geo-politics and geo-economics is emerging, the challenges will be bigger and in those challenging period your ability to have good supply chain control will define your resilience and ability to compete in difficult times," Vaishnaw said.

He also said that a new skilling framework for electronics manufacturing is in the offing.

The 17 projects greenlit now in the second tranche, bring total projects under the scheme to 24.

The players included Jabil Circuit India, Aequs Consumer Products, Uno Minda, ASUX Safety Components India, Zetfab India, TE Connectivity India, and Meena Electrotech, among others. The categories include camera module, connectors, multi-layer PCB, oscillators, enclosures among others and are spread across nine states. *—PTI*

Mkts rally for 6th day; Sensex up 388 pts, Nifty reclaims 26,000

MUMBAI, 17 NOV

Equity markets extended their winning streak to a sixth straight session on Monday, with the Sensex rising 388 points and the Nifty closing above the 26,000 mark amid broad-based buying and strong corporate earnings.

The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 388.17 points, or 0.46 per cent, to 84,950.95, while the NSE Nifty gained 103.40 points, or 0.40 per cent, to settle at 26,013.45. Traders said sustained buying by domestic institutional investors supported the rally.

Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Investments, said markets were holding near the key 26,000 level as investors awaited a potential trade deal, while robust Q2 mid-cap earnings had strengthened expectations of growth revival.

Among Sensex constituents, Eternal, Maruti Suzuki India, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Mahindra & Mahindra, Tech Mahindra, Titan, HDFC Bank, PowerGrid, Bajaj Finserv, HCL Technologies, Bajaj Finance and Larsen & Toubro gained. Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles, Asian Paints, UltraTech Cement, BEL, Tata Steel, Adani Ports, Hindustan Unilever, ITC, TCS and Reliance Industries were the laggards. *—PTI*

IRB shares up 7% after Rs 9,270 cr NHAI project win

Shares of IRB Infrastructure Developers rose around 7 per cent on Monday after the company secured a Rs 9,270 crore toll-operate-transfer project from NHAI in Uttar Pradesh. The stock hit Rs 45.93 on the BSE and Rs 45.95 on the NSE. The award covers 366 km across the Lucknow–Ayodhya–Gorakhpur and Lucknow–Varanasi corridors for a 20-year revenue-linked concession.

'ITR forms, IT rules to be notified in Jan'

NEW DELHI, 17 NOV

The Income Tax Department will notify the ITR forms and rules under the simplified Income Tax Act, 2025 by January, giving taxpayers time to adjust before the new law comes into force from April 1 next fiscal, CBDT chief Ravi Agrawal said on Monday.

Agrawal said the aim is to keep the forms simple to ease compliance under the new legislation, which replaces the six-decade-old Income Tax Act, 1961. "We are designing the forms and rules and intend to put these in place by January," he said after launching the Taxpayers' Lounge at the India International Trade Fair.

All forms under the new Act, including TDS quarterly returns and ITRs, are being redesigned by the Directorate of Systems in coordination with the tax policy division to make them more taxpayer-friendly. After scrutiny by the law department, the rules will be notified and placed before Parliament. The Income Tax Act, 2025, passed on 12 August, aims to simplify tax laws without altering tax rates. It removes redundant provisions, updates outdated language and reduces the number of sections from 819 to 536 and chapters from 47 to 23. The word count has been cut from 5.12 lakh to 2.6 lakh, supported by 39 tables and 40 formulas to improve clarity. *—PTI*

IPOs becoming exit vehicle for early investors: CEA

MUMBAI, 17 NOV

Amid a boom in share sales, India's chief economic advisor V Anantha Nageswaran on Monday rued that the initial public offerings are becoming exit vehicles for early investors in an enterprise, and remarked that this is undermining the spirit of public markets.

Speaking at an event organised by CII here, Nageswaran added that the country's capital markets should evolve "not just in scale, but in purpose" as well.

The CEA also urged to guard against "celebrating wrong milestones" such as market capitalisation or the volume of derivative trading, saying that they are not measures of "financial sophistication" and such efforts "only risk diverting domestic savings away from productive investment".

He also remarked that while India has succeeded in developing a robust and sophisticated capital market, the same may have also contributed in part to "short run earnings management optics" because they are linked to increases in management compensation and also m-cap.

A total of 55 Indian companies have done their initial public offerings in the April-September period, raising nearly Rs 65,000 crore. Most of the issuances were offer for sales by existing investors, with very little quantum of new share issuances which benefits a company. *—PTI*

India's trade deficit widens to $41 as exports dip 11%

NEW DELHI, 17 NOV

India's exports contracted 11.8 per cent to USD 34.38 billion in October, showed government data released on Monday.

Imports jumped 16.63 per cent to USD 76.06 billion.

The country's trade deficit stood at USD 41.68 billion during the reporting month.

Imports surged due to increased shipments of gold and silver.

Gold imports jumped to USD 14.72 bn in the last month against USD 4.92 bn recorded in the same month last year.

The country's exports to the United States declined to USD 6.3 bn in October as against USD 6.9 bn registered in the year-ago month, Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal told reporters here.

During April-October this fiscal, exports increased marginally by 0.63 per cent to USD 254.25 billion. At the same time, imports rose 6.37 per cent to USD 451.08 billion, the commerce ministry data showed. *—PTI*

Unemployment rate steady at 5.2% in October: Govt survey

NEW DELHI, 17 NOV

India's unemployment rate for those aged 15 and above remained unchanged at 5.2 per cent in October, according to the latest Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation on Monday. The jobless rate was also 5.2 per cent in September and July.

A dip in rural unemployment, from 4.6 per cent in September to 4.4 per cent in October, was offset by a rise in urban joblessness from 6.8 per cent to 7.0 per cent, keeping the overall rate stable. Female unemployment fell slightly to 5.4 per cent, driven by a drop in rural female joblessness from 4.3 per cent to 4.0 per cent. The male unemployment rate remained steady at 5.1 per cent.

The Worker Population Ratio increased to 52.5 per cent in October, continuing a steady rise since June. Female WPR has grown consistently, reaching 32.4 per cent in October, with rural female participation climbing to 36.9 per cent from 33.6 per cent in June.

Labour Force Participation Rate also rose for the fourth consecutive month to 55.4 per cent, the highest in six months. Female LFPR increased to 34.2 per cent, driven by rural gains.

The October estimates are based on data collected from 3,74,164 individuals. The PLFS sampling methodology was revamped in January to improve high-frequency labour market monitoring. *—PTI*

Andhra to get ₹2,500 crore aquaculture park

NEW DELHI, 17 NOV

Kings Infra Ventures Ltd has signed an agreement with the Andhra Pradesh government to develop a Rs 2,500-crore aquaculture technology park near Srikakulam. This facility, covering 500 acres, will be India's first AI-driven aquaculture park, positioning Andhra Pradesh as a centre for technology-enabled sustainable seafood production.

The Kerala-based firm plans to invest Rs 500 crore directly into core infrastructure, processing facilities, and research and development, with an additional Rs 2,000 crore expected to come from ancillary industries, small businesses, and renewable energy ventures. The memorandum of understanding was signed at the recent CII partnership summit in Visakhapatnam.

The project will include hatcheries, indoor farming systems, processing lines, and a marine bio-actives division, all integrated through Kings Infra's proprietary AI operating system, BlueTechOS, which will be built and operated from Visakhapatnam. The park is set to train 5,000 aquaculture professionals over five years and support year-round multi-species cultivation, including shrimp, seabass, and tilapia. *—PTI*

FROM FOOD TO PERSONAL CARE

Gen Z now shape parents' buying choices: Report

NEW DELHI, 17 NOV

Indian parents are increasingly validating their purchasing decisions based on what their Gen Z teens recommend, with the younger cohort emerging as the key driver of household adoption of new-age brands, according to a report by venture capital firm Fireside Ventures.

The study highlights a major behavioural shift: choices once led by parents, from food and personal care to wearables and tech accessories, are now shaped by teenagers.

"Parents now validate decisions through the lens of what their teens discover, recommend and use, often on Instagram, YouTube or a friend's phone," the report said.

Gen Z's influence is particularly strong in India I and India II markets, where their digital-first discovery patterns serve as a benchmark for what is modern, relevant and trustworthy.

The report predicts that by 2035, half of incumbent brands may lose relevance, with Gen Z becoming the most powerful internal marketer for Indian consumer brands.

The research also notes that Gen Z and Gen Alpha together are driving the "family wallet", with Gen Z alone projected to account for over USD 1 trillion in spending by 2030. Labelled the "Reverse Generation", they influence their parents rather than the other way around—seeking convenience and authenticity, preferring experiences, and building trust through transparency, purpose and community.

These shifts, the report adds, present significant opportunities for founders to build hyper-personalised, community-led and digital-native brands tailored to this rapidly evolving demographic. *—ANI*

IN MONEY LAUNDERING

Anil Ambani skips ED summons again, says will appear 'virtually'

NEW DELHI, 17 NOV

Reliance Group Chairman Anil Ambani refused to appear before the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in a Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) case for the second time on Monday.

The businessman said he was ready to depose before the federal probe agency via "virtual appearance/recorded video."

The ED had rejected Ambani's offer and issued him a fresh summons for Monday.

According to sources, the agency had asked Ambani to appear before it in person on 14 November and record his statement.

ED said that after attaching assets worth Rs 7,500 crore belonging to Ambani and his companies under the anti-money laundering law, a search carried out against Reliance Infrastructure Ltd. found that Rs 40 crore was allegedly "siphoned" from the Jaipur-Reengus highway project.

"Funds moved through Surat-based shell companies to Dubai. The trail has unearthed a wider international hawala network exceeding Rs 600 crore," the agency said.

The ED has recorded the statement of various persons, including some alleged hawala dealers. The case, dating back to 2010, concerns issues associated with a road contractor.

In 2010, Reliance Infrastructure Ltd. awarded an engineering, procurement and construction contract to build the JR Toll Road (Jaipur-Reengus highway).

"This was a purely domestic contract with no foreign exchange component involved whatsoever. The JR Toll Road has been fully completed and, from 2021 onwards, has been with the National Highways Authority of India," the statement said.

Ambani was also questioned by the ED in a money laundering case linked to an alleged Rs 17,000-crore bank fraud against his group companies. *—PTI*

SC TO EXAMINE PIL SEEKING PROBE INTO ALLEGED RCOM BANK FRAUD

NEW DELHI, 17 NOV

Supreme Court on Monday agreed to hear a PIL demanding a court-monitored investigation into an alleged large-scale banking and corporate fraud involving Reliance Communications (RCom), its group companies and promoter Anil Ambani.

The petition, mentioned by lawyer Prashant Bhushan before a bench headed by Chief Justice B R Gavai, alleges a bank fraud of over Rs 20,000 crore and seeks an independent probe. The bench said it would list the matter.

Filed by former Union secretary EAS Sarma, the PIL accuses the Anil Ambani-led Reliance ADA Group of systematic diversion of public funds, fabrication of accounts and institutional complicity. It says the CBI FIR of 21 August and related ED action cover only a small part of the alleged fraud.

The plea states that RCom, Reliance Infratel and Reliance Telecom secured Rs 31,580 crore in loans from an SBI-led consortium between 2013 and 2017. A forensic audit received by SBI in October 2020 allegedly found large-scale diversion of funds, repayment of unrelated loans and use of shell companies such as Netizen Engineering and Kunj Bihari Developers.

It also cites alleged sham preference-share deals causing losses of over Rs 1,800 crore, questions SBI's five-year delay in filing its complaint, and says agencies have failed to probe the roles of bank officials, auditors and regulators despite extensive red flags. *—PTI*

East Bengal women beat Bam Khatoon 3-1

WUHAN, 17 NOV

East Bengal FC, riding on goals from Shilky Hemam, Fazila Ikwaput, and Resty Nanziri, defeated Iranian side Bam Khatoon FC 3-1 in their AFC Women's Champions League 2025/26 Group B opener, here on Monday.The victory in the early stages of the tournament will come as an early boost to East Bengal's quarterfinal hopes as they look forward to the clash against defending champions Wuhan Jiangda Women's FC next.The East Bengal women hit the ground running and took the lead in the fourth minute after two blocked attempts by Fazila Ikwaput saw the ball falling favourably to Shilky Hemam, who struck a low shot into the bottom right corner from just above the box.The early strike set the tone for the remainder of the game as East Bengal dictated the tempo.—*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Haaland takes Norway to 1st WC since 1998

LONDON, 17 NOV

Norway qualified for their first World Cup since 1998 after Erling Haaland struck again in a 4-1 thumping of Italy on Sunday, which sealed a spot in next summer's finals in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Haaland scored the decisive brace in the space of seconds at a soaking San Siro for Norway, who completed Group I with a perfect 24 points from their eight qualifying matches. Norway would have had to lose by nine goals or more to be overtaken by Italy for the group's only automatic place for next summer's finals in North America, but Stale Solbakken's side gloriously ended their campaign in front of 70,000 people. However, Solbakken was coy as to his powerful team's chances now that a 28-year weight has come to an end.—*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Sangakkara reappointed as RR head coach

NEW DELHI, 17 NOV

Rajasthan Royals on Monday announced the appointment of Sri Lanka legend Kumar Sangakkara as their head coach for the 2026 Indian Premier League (IPL) season, following the exit of Rahul Dravid from the role. Dravid had left the franchise in August this year, and Sangakkara, who has been the franchise's Director of Cricket since 2021, will be returning as the head coach, having served in the same role from 2021-2024. "Director of Cricket Kumar Sangakkara will also take charge as Head Coach for IPL 2026.—*PTI*

Pakistan sweeps Sri Lanka 3-0 in ODI series

RAWALPINDI, 17 NOV

Pakistan completed a 3-0 series sweep of Sri Lanka with a clinical six-wicket victory in their third and final ODI with 32 balls remaining. Mohammad Rizwan (61 not out) and Fakhar Zaman (55) scored their second successive half-centuries and eased Pakistan to 215-4 in 44.4 overs on Sunday. Sri Lanka earlier wasted a brisk start before it was bowled out for 211 in 45.2 overs after Afridi won the toss and elected to field. Pakistan beat Sri Lanka by six runs in a thrilling first ODI, and Babar's first international century in over two years anchored Pakistan to a thumping eight-wicket victory in the second game at Pindi Cricket Stadium.—*PTI*

Ranji: Smaran's 227 puts Karnataka in driver's seat

Karnataka declared a mammoth 547 for 8 in 160 overs

HUBLI, 17 NOV

Ravichandran Smaran hit an unbeaten 227 Ranji Trophy Group B match against Chandigarh here on Monday *PHOTO: PTI*

Promising Ravichandran Smaran hit an unbeaten 227 and was being supported well by the lower-order to put Karnataka in the driver's seat on the second day of their Ranji Trophy Group B match against Chandigarh here on Monday.

Resuming at the overnight personal score of 110 with Karnataka at 298 for 5, Smaran stitched crucial partnerships with Shreyas Gopal (62), Vidyadhar Patel (30), and Shikhar Shetty (59) as Karnataka declared at a mammoth 547 for 8 in 160 overs.

Smaran first stitched 141 runs for the sixth wicket with Gopal and then shared an unconquered 120 with Patel to take Karnataka to the imposing total. Smaran decorated his 362-ball knock with 16 boundaries and two hits over the fence. For Chandigarh, medium pacer Jagjit Singh (2/70), off-spinner Vishu Kashyap (2/141), and left-arm spinner Nishunk Birla (2/159) shared six wickets between them. At stumps on the second day, Chandigarh were struggling at 72 for 4 in reply to Karnataka's mammoth score.

Opener Arjun Azad made 32. At the close of play, skipper Manan Vohra was batting on 14. Leg-spinner Gopal was the pick of the bowlers for Karnataka with figures of 3 for 18.

Brief Scores:
Karnataka, 547 for 8 declared in 160 overs (Ravichandran Smaran 227; Karun Nair 95, Shreyas Gopal 62; Jagjit Singh 2/70) vs Chandigarh 72 for 4 in 17.4 overs (Arjin Azad 32; Shreyas Gopal 3/18).

Lad's career-best 170, Shardul's three-for gives Mumbai control

Siddhesh Lad's career-best 170 and skipper Shardul Thakur's three-wicket burst underlined Mumbai's domination as the hosts reduced Pondicherry to 43 for 4 after piling up 630/5 declared on Day Two of their Ranji Trophy Elite Group D clash here Monday.

Thakur struck twice in the first three balls and returned 3/17, following up on a minute-a-mile fifty earlier in the day as his side left Pondicherry staring at a mountain to climb. The visitors are trailing by 587 runs in the first innings.

Thakur cleaned up Neyan Kangayan (0) in the first ball of the innings and trapped Paras Ratnaparkhe (0) in the third, while having Anand Singh Bais (5) caught behind in a fiery spell with the new ball on a flat wicket here at the Wankhede Stadium.

Earlier, Lad struck his 13th first-class hundred, his third of the season and second on the trot, to make 170 off 285 balls with 19 fours. —*PTI*

PRASAD CONDEMNS SUDDEN POSTPONEMENT OF KSCA ELECTIONS

BENGALURU, 17 NOV

Venkatesh Prasad today voiced his deep shock and disappointment over the abrupt postponement of the Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA) elections, which were originally scheduled for 30 November

Speaking to the media, Prasad stated, "We were stunned to learn that the elections have been deferred to 30 December. The primary focus here should be cricket, not politics. We are not participating for political reasons. Our sole objective is to revive top-level cricket at Chinnaswamy Stadium, to bring back international matches and IPL fixtures. That is our mission."

He continued, "To make this possible, these elections must take place. That is the natural course of action. KSCA is at a pivotal juncture and needs change. It is vital for elections to proceed so that a fresh committee can implement its vision. We have no issues with the Election Commission and fully respect their decisions. However, this postponement has come as a complete surprise." Echoing these concerns, Vinay Mruthyunjaya commented, "The responsibility to conduct elections rests squarely with the Managing Committee. They are directly accountable for this delay. The Electoral Officer sent two letters to the Managing Committee on the 14th and 15th, but received no reply until today only this morning did he get a response. There has been a total lack of cooperation from the Managing Committee." He added, "I place responsibility entirely on the Managing Committee. The confusion has been orchestrated, leading to this outcome. We urge all KSCA members to take this issue seriously and demand an end to this undemocratic approach to governance." —*Salar News*

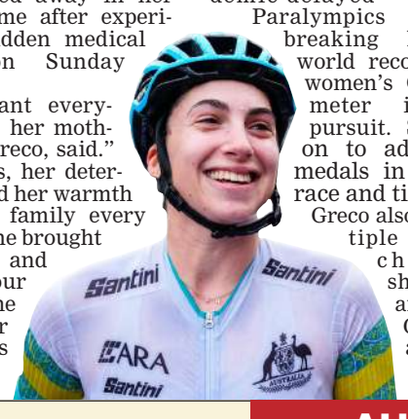
Paralympic gold medalist Paige Greco dies at 28

ADELAIDE, 17 NOV

Australian cyclist Paige Greco, a Paralympic gold medalist, has died. She was 28.

A joint statement by the Australian Paralympic Committee and Australian Cycling Federation said that Greco "passed away in her Adelaide home after experiencing a sudden medical episode" on Sunday night.

"Paige meant everything to us," her mother, Natalie Greco, said." Her kindness, her determination, and her warmth touched our family every single day. She brought so much joy and pride into our lives, and the pain of her passing is something we will carry forever.



"While we are devastated by her loss, we are incredibly proud of the person she was and the way she represented Australia." Greco, who was born with cerebral palsy, won the first gold medal of the pandemic-delayed Tokyo Paralympics in 2021, breaking her own world record in the women's C1-3 3,000-meter individual pursuit. She went on to add bronze medals in the road race and time trial.

Greco also won multiple world championship titles and World Cup medals.—*PTI*

Jannik Sinner beats Carlos Alcaraz in straight sets to retain ATP Finals title

TURIN, 17 NOV

The final installment of the "Sincaraz" rivalry for 2025 went to Jannik Sinner.

The second-ranked Sinner beat top-ranked Carlos Alcaraz 7-6 (4), 7-5 for the ATP Finals trophy on Sunday in the sixth meeting this year between the two players who are dominating men's tennis.

Sinner defended the title before his home Italian fans for only his second victory over Alcaraz this year after also beating the Spaniard in the Wimbledon final. "It was an incredible season," Sinner said. "To finish it this way, before my Italian fans, is very special for me."

Alcaraz had already secured the year-ending No. 1 ranking and was contesting his first final at the event for the year's top eight players.

Alcaraz still leads his career meetings with Sinner, 10-6.

Sinner and Alcaraz have met in the last three Grand Slam finals. Alcaraz beat Sinner in a fifth-set tiebreaker to win the French Open; Sinner gained a measure of revenge at Wimbledon; then Alcaraz again came out on top at the U.S. Open.

They also clashed this year in the Italian Open final (won by Alcaraz) and the Cincinnati Open final (won by Alcaraz when Sinner retired due to illness).

"I hope you are going to be ready for next year because I will be ready to hopefully play more finals against you," Alcaraz said during the trophy ceremony.

Tactically, both players demonstrated aggressive baseline play, but Sinner's ability to maintain his nerve under pressure proved decisive. Alcaraz's decision to take a medical timeout appeared strategic, but Sinner's consistent play in the key moments shifted the momentum., For Sinner, this title capped the best season of his career, having reached all four Grand Slam finals and won two majors.

It was Sinner's 10th straight win at the finals, stretching back to his loss to Novak Djokovic in the 2023 final. —*PTI*

IND VS SA 2ND TEST

Nitish to join team in Guwahati if Gill fails to recover

GUWAHATI, 17 NOV

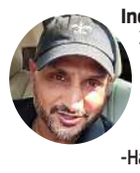
Indian captain Shubman Gill remains a doubtful participant in his side's second Test against South Africa, set to start in Guwahati on 22 November.

This could mean a return for all-rounder Nitish Kumar Reddy, who was released from the squad for the first Test and is currently with the India A team for its 50-over series against South Africa A.Nitish was already set to rejoin the team in Guwahati and now could walk back into the team, in Gill's absence, after being left out in favour of the in-form Dhruv Jurel for the Kolkata Test. Gill suffered a neck spasm during India's defeat in the series opener in Kolkata.

He batted just three balls in the first innings on Saturday before retiring out and took no further part in the game. The 26-year-old was later admitted to a private hospital in Kolkata and was kept under observation before being discharged late on Sunday. Indian coach Gautam Gambhir had confirmed on Sunday that Gill's situation was still under assessment. Gill's potential absence could throw up a fresh selection dilemma for India heading into the must-win Guwahati Test.While top-order batters Sai Sudharsan, who was dropped for the first Test, and Devdutt Padikkal appear to be the straightforward replacement options, their addition could prove to be disadvantageous for the team.

Nitish Kumar *PHOTO: PTI*

In Kolkata, India fielded six left-handed batters in the XI for the first time in its Test history thereby elevating the threat of Proteas off-spinner Simon Harmer. —*PTI*



India slipped to a 30-run defeat while chasing 124 runs. They have destroyed Test cricket

-Harbhajan Singh, former India spinner

Deaflympics: Anuya and Pranjali bag gold and silver medals

NEW DELHI, 17 NOV

Young Anuya Prasad gave herself a birthday present while Pranjali Prashant Dhumal added to India's joy as the duo completed a 1-2 finish in the women's 10m air pistol event at the Deaflympics, in Tokyo on Monday.

Anuya clinched the gold medal in style, breaking the Deaf Final World Record (DFWR) en route to winning the top-podium spot. In contrast, Pranjali broke the Qualification World Record (QWR) on her way to securing a place in the finals. In the men's 10m air pistol, Deshwal, who equalled the Qualification World Record, won silver to take India's medal tally in shooting to seven.

—*PTI*

FIDE WORLD CUP2025

Arjun draws first QF game against Wei Yi

PANAJI, 17 NOV

Seeking to qualify for the Candidates' event, India's top-rated Arjun Erigaisi walked off with an easy draw with his Chinese counterpart Wei Yi in the first game of the quarterfinals here on Monday.

On what turned out to be an easy day for Arjun, Alexander Donchenko finally realised that things were rosy every day.

TheGerman had been on a dream run, which is likely to end now as Nodirbek Yakubboev won an exciting game one with white pieces. If Yakubboev can hold the German in the next game to a draw, he will be through to the semifinal.

For Arjun, the opening was important, and it did not pose any issues. The young Indian generation is rewriting the theoretical aspects of the game, and Arjun is no exception.

As it turned out of a routine Ruy Lopez theory, Arjun equalised with a thematic pawn sacrifice earlier in the middle game.When Wei Yi returned the favour, the position was already dead-equal and the players shook hands to split the point in a mere 31 moves.

Javokhir Sindarov of Uzbekistan played out a draw with Jose Eduardo Martinez Alcantara of Mexico in a well-contested game. The Uzbek was never under real threat and could be seen as a potential semifinalist out of this contest.

In the only other remaining match, Samuel Shankland of the United States also played out a draw with Russian Andrey Esipenko.Complete results quarterfinals game 1: Javokhir Sindarov (Uzb) drew with Jose Eduardo Martinez Alcantara (Mex). —*PTI*

AUSTRALIAN OPEN

Satwik-Chirag pair anchors India's hopes

SYDNEY, 17 NOV

With India's singles stars still searching for rhythm, the spotlight will once again be on Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty as the top-seeded men's doubles pair eyes its first title of the season at the Australian Open Super 500 starting here on Tuesday.

The Asian Games champions have been the bright spots in an otherwise troubled season for Indian badminton, weaving together a second World Championships bronze and back-to-back runner-up finishes at the Hong Kong Super 500 and China Masters Super 750.

The two, who spent 18 weeks as world No. 1, had slipped to No. 27 in May but fought their way back to No. 3. They will be eager to put together another strong run ahead of the World Tour Finals.

The Commonwealth Games champions will open against Chinese Taipei's Chang Ko-Chi and Po Li-Wei.

Bruised by injuries and lean patches but intermittently shining with flashes of brilliance, India's top singles stars, including Lakshya Sen and HS Prannoy, will hope to find the consistent rhythm that has eluded them for much of the year.

Lakshya seemed to have rediscovered his form with a final appearance at the Hong Kong Open after enduring a run of poor results since his heartbreaking fourth-place finish at the Paris Olympics.

The 24-year-old from Almora looked sharp in Japan last week before bowing out in the semifinals. Seeded seventh here, he will hope to build on the momentum when he opens against Chinese Taipei's Su Li Yang. —*PTI*

Shooting World C'ships: Gurpreet fetches silver

CAIRO, 17 NOV

Olympian Gurpreet Singh came agonisingly close to becoming the world champion in the men's 25m Centre Fire Pistol event but eventually got a silver after losing on inner 10s to Ukraine's Pavlo Korostylov at the Olympic Shooting Range here.

This was Gurpreet's second individual medal in the World Championships, the first also being a silver won back in 2018 at Changwon in the 25m Standard Pistol event. Yann Pierre Louis Fridrici of France won the bronze here.

India thus ended their World Championship campaign in third place with a total of 13 medals, including three gold, six silver, and four bronze, behind China. The Chinese team mustered 12 gold, seven silver, and two bronze.

South Korea secured seven gold, three silver, and four bronze medals to end second in the overall standings.

Gurpreet shot a total of 584-18x over two days of competition in the precision and rapid stages. —*PTI*

Gurpreet Singh *PHOTO: PTI*